

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (17/20)

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"I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery" Thomas Jefferson

JOBS FUND PROJECT LAUNCHED BY CGA

The Citrus Growers Association (CGA) has issued a call for applications for a R307 million Economic Transformation of Black Citrus Growers Programme that has been launched. The programme is expected to create an additional 1 726 permanent and seasonal jobs in the citrus industry.

This is welcome news as South Africa begins the difficult task of rebuilding its economy amidst the Covid-19 outbreak. The creation of employment opportunities, especially in our rural areas, is an essential step on the road to economic recovery.

Last year, the CGA submitted an application to the Jobs Fund for a project that would make funding and technical support available to black citrus growers for orchard establishment, expansion and rehabilitation, as well as on-farm development of various infrastructure including packhouses, bulk-water supply and irrigation systems.

The Jobs Fund has committed R118 million to the project, with the Land Bank agreeing to contribute an additional R116 million in loan funding. The CGA has contributed R24 million, while the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries and AGRISETA have pledged R34 million and R12 million respectively.

To qualify for funding growers have to have a minimum of 60% black ownership (of both assets and operations) as defined by the B-BBEE Act of 2013, while priority will be given to enterprises with 100% black ownership. Other criteria that need to be met include: producing or packing citrus that is exported, having appropriate management structures, relationships with external service providers (financial auditors, legal services, logistics, fruit exports etc.), human resource development plans, security of land tenure and sufficient water supply. Most importantly, applicants must also demonstrate that they will create permanent and seasonal job opportunities with the development funding.

Black citrus farmers interested in applying for funding can visit <https://cga-gdc.org.za/jobs-fund-application> for more information and submit their application electronically.

COVID-19: 60% OF THE POPULATION WILL GET IT

In my first year economics class the lecturer told us to look to our left, and then to look to our right – and only one of us would pass. The pass rate for economics 1 was 33%. Health experts indicate that 60% plus of the population will get the corona virus. Most will experience it as a mild flu. The problem is that there are those who have compromised immune system and the elderly who could suffer greatly, some of whom die. There are many opinions about what is best to do in the face of this pandemic – those who say herd immunity is best; those who say a hard lockdown must continue, and most who are very happy that they do not need to make the decision.

Given that most of us are going to get the disease, we need to be compassionate with those who do go down with CVD-19; it is not a death sentence and they sure did not get sick on purpose. We need to go about our work without fear of being infected – one in three of us are going to get sick, most will get better with little pain and suffering. We just need to protect the most vulnerable.

PACKED AND SHIPPED

| Million 15 Kg Cartons to end Week 18 | Packed | Packed | Packed | Shipped | Shipped | Original Estimate | Latest Prediction | Final Packed |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| SOURCE: PPECB/AgriHub | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2020 | 2020 | 2019 |
| Grapefruit | 3.1 m | 3.9 m | 3.7 m | 1.1 m | 2.1 m | 16.7 m | 16.7 m | 16.1 m |
| Soft Citrus | 2.7 m | 2.1 m | 2.7 m | 1 m | 2 m | 23.3 m | 23.2 m | 18.3 m |
| Lemons | 5.5 m | 4 m | 9.3 m | 2.6 m | 7 m | 26.4 m | 27.1 m | 22.1 m |
| Navels | 0.6 m | 0.5 m | 0.7 m | - | 0.2 m | 26.5 m | 26.5 m | 24.3 m |
| Valencia | 0.1 m | 0.2 m | - | - | - | 50.4 m | 50.4 m | 46.8 m |
| Total | 12 m | 10.7 m | 16.4 m | 4.7 m | 11.3 m | 143.3 m | 143.9 m | 127.5 m |

CGA GROUP OF COMPANIES (CRI, RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY & CITRUS ACADEMY) ARE FUNDED BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS GROWERS