

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (51/20)

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Justin Chadwick 18 December 2020



“The best way to predict the future is to create it” Peter Drucker

WHAT COULD GO WRONG

On 10 January in newsletter 1/20 some bold predictions were made – most were wrong!! Who could have seen the impact of the COVID pandemic? The prediction was that the oil price would increase (in fact it did the opposite, dropping from US\$68 to US\$48 per barrel); it was predicted that export volumes would not grow as much as expected due to dry conditions (export volumes increased from 127 to a record 146 million cartons); and consumer prices would be constrained (excellent prices were achieved in the market). However, some predictions were correct – port challenges persisted and the rand weakened.

Don't expect predictions in the January 2021 newsletters!!

PACKAGING WORK GROUP

Dawid Groenewald, convenor of the Packaging Work Group reported on their meeting from 10 November 2020. He quotes from the minutes: “Our Citrus Growers and all the other role players were under severe pressure and faced with many challenges. Looking back the 2020 citrus season can only be described as a miracle. The paper, carton and pallet manufacturers performed extremely well and they were thanked for a job well done.”

The top class facilities at the Sappi Technology Centre in Pretoria were used to test citrus cartons; SAPPI has generously agreed to continue in 2021 to have the testing done at the facility at no cost – many thanks. I would like to echo the thanks to the packaging suppliers for their ability to keep the citrus industry supplied with packaging material throughout the 2020 season. When the CGA COVID 19 Response Committee met for the first time in April 2020, the availability of packaging material was identified as a possible risk. This never materialised thanks to the responsibility and diligence of all citrus packaging material suppliers.

WORLD CITRUS ORGANISATION (WCO) DECEMBER MEETING

On 14 December the WCO met to discuss the forthcoming northern hemisphere citrus season, and to receive a presentation on health and nutrition aspects of citrus fruit. The WCO is going from strength to strength, with representation of 12 national associations and 20 associate members. All those involved in citrus are urged to join – the goal is to represent all in the sector.

The outlook for the northern hemisphere season (Mediterranean region and USA) indicates a similar season to 2019/20 – production at 28.7 million tonnes. Soft citrus is anticipated to increase by 4.6%, and lemons by 7.8%; while oranges are forecast to decrease by 2.6% and grapefruit by 9.7%.

There are some differences within the northern hemisphere regions: Europe to increase by 10% while other Mediterranean regions drop by 8%, and USA drop by 9% (no figures available for Asian production). Commentators commented that the season had started earlier than normal (by about a week), as the southern hemisphere imports ended earlier than normal there was a smooth transition. In addition, most reported on smaller sized fruit as a result of climatic conditions; the US reported normal (oranges and grapefruit) to big sizing (soft citrus and lemon).

The presentation on health and nutrition qualities of citrus by Dr Claudie Dhuique-Mayer was excellent – and is available to WCO members. The WCO will now build on this information.

THE CGA GROUP (CRI, RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY & CITRUS ACADEMY) ARE SUPPORTED BY AND WORK FOR THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITRUS GROWERS