

***"Worrying is like paying a debt you don't own" Mark Twain***

**CGA CITRUS LEGEND – MIKHAIL FATEEV**

When you receive correspondence from Mikhail, it is like reading poetry. Although English is not his mother tongue, he writes with imagination and beauty. Not only does he write beautiful English, he has even written songs in Afrikaans, and had them recorded in Stellenbosch – such is his love for South Africa.

Mikhail pioneered the importing of South African fruit to Russia in the 1980's and 1990's. The program is so successful that now around 10% of southern African citrus is exported to Russia.

Mikhail has been a CGA representative in Russia since 2010, proving 15 years of commitment to southern African citrus. As the CGA's representative in Russia he has kept value chain players aware of market conditions, prices and other interesting information through a weekly newsletter. He has formed strong relationships with importers, the government and the press, ensuring that problems in the market are minimised.

Mikhail has mixed with Presidents and with workers, and everybody in between. His easy manner and engaging personality makes him a hit with whoever he deals with.

One memorable Mikhail moment was in 2022 when the 8 billionth child in the world was born. Many countries claimed the 8 billionth child – as did Russia. He decided it would be a good idea to get some publicity by sending some citrus to the mother and child. Of course the media was there and as a result there are photos of this poor lady with her newborn child in a hospital room surrounded by cartons of South African citrus. Mikhail never gave up an opportunity to get publicity for South African citrus.

At the start of every season Mikhail travelled to the port and welcomed the first vessel carrying South African citrus – making sure that the first consignments were well received and discharged with no problem – and involving media and government officials where possible.

I have to add Mikhail's response (via WhatsApp) to being honoured as a Citrus Legend: *I can't find words to express my feelings. Or there are too many words to articulate, I don't know. The world now seems to me not so sad and unhopeful. Brotherhood of people of a kind exists! God shows his love and care through the people he sends to us. I could have never expected!*

*Your decision breaks common traditions and change views. By the way, with appointment of a foreigner the status has expanded to international which is again not common on the one hand, but very much in line of the new world global concept (and note your vision!)*

*It seems I face two problems. One is retirement. Now, how can I retire and skip responsibility after receiving such honor? The other is that from now on I must become a better person to stand up to the new standards and justify people's expectations. So, I must stop lying, drinking, womanizing, violating traffic regulations, etc. It seems that you have opened a new chapter of the book of my destiny.*

**LOOKING BACK OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY**

Sportsmen know that the performance of a team is dependent upon the leadership, coaching team and captain. Similarly, industry sectors strive where leadership leads with purpose. The grower sector of the southern African citrus industry is blessed with great leadership over the past twenty-five years. Two Board members – Jock Danckwerts (East Cape Midlands) and George Hall (Boland) are moving into their 23<sup>rd</sup> year on the CGA Board, with Per Noddeboe (Eswatini) close by on 22. Another Director is going into his 18<sup>th</sup> year – Mike Woodburn (KZN), equal to his provincial mate from Pongola, Antoine Rouillard (previous Chairman) who ended his tenure on 18. Hoppie Nel (Onderberg) served for 16 years (many as Chairman); while Phillip Dempsey (Patensie) is in his 15<sup>th</sup> year, and Charles Rossouw (Senwes) and Paul Bristow (Zimbabwe) their 14<sup>th</sup>. Cornel van der Merwe, also a past Chairman (Onderberg) is entering his 11<sup>th</sup> year, and Andrew Muller (Nelspruit) his tenth. Others to leave with ten years of service or more are Graham Piner (Nelspruit – 11), Fanie Meyer (Hoedspruit – 10) and Eddie Ueckermann (KZN Midlands – 10).