

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO (23/25)

Boitshoko Ntshabele, 6 June 2025

"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things." - Mother Teresa



ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA

The CGA visited the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) yesterday where we had the opportunity to address Ambassadors to Africa and their teams on the occasion of their annual Strategic Engagement Session, at the kind invitation of Deputy Director General Ambassador Tebogo Seokolo.

We joined a panel discussion that included Agbiz's Chief Economist, Wandile Sihlobo, and Sifiso Ntombela, President of the Agricultural Economists Association of Southern Africa. The key theme was unlocking Africa's agricultural wealth through increased production, the transformation of agro-processing value chains for economic growth, and youth empowerment, which placed the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) central to the discussion. Somewhat modelled on the European Union integration project, once fully implemented, the AfCFTA would represent the world's largest free trade area. The AfCFTA was preceded by the integration process of the Regional Economic Communities, including the Southern African Development Community, where 80% of SA's agriculture exports are destined. This integration project continues. Whilst intra-African trade has improved to 15% as of 2023, it still pales to that of other continents. Africa is home to a population of about 1.3 billion people, of which 60% are youth, and has a GDP estimated at \$3.4 trillion. The CGA's presentation was a case study based on our journey from deregulation up to the present, and how building an ecosystem underpinned by research has allowed the citrus industry to grow in leaps and bounds to where we are the second biggest citrus exporter in the world. We highlighted that our grower investment in research has led to skills development and capacity building, facilitated market access, as well as assisted in ensuring that on-farm practices by growers comply with market requirements to over ninety destinations.

We also introduced the Ambassadors to our vision to export 260 million 15kg cartons by 2032 and the opportunities for diplomats and embassies to assist in facilitating market access for our fruit. Whilst trade in Africa remains low, addressing several constraints that include policy, infrastructure development, and speedy product clearance at customs should see more of our citrus moving north of Limpopo. Wandile emphasised the need for the continent to embrace science. It has especially contributed to agricultural growth in South Africa by increasing yields. He underscored the role played by agriculture in poverty alleviation, a key concern on the continent and in South Africa specifically.

In engagement with the Ambassadors, it was clear that economic diplomacy has become challenging and that exports on their own are sometimes problematic, as it gave an impression of a dumping of produce. The debate also touched on the blockage by Namibia and Botswana of our South African products, including citrus, and the need for youth and women involvement in agriculture, which are issues pertinent to the transformation of the sector. The overriding sentiment was that of the urgent need for investment in Africa for economic development.

Packed and Shipped Table

End of Week 22 Million 15kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed	Vision 260
SOURCE: PPECB/AGRIHUB	2023	2024	2025	2024	2025	2025	2025	2024	2025
Grapefruit	9.0 m	9.6 m	9.5 m	7.6 m	8.1 m	15.3 m	15.1 m	14.4 m	16.8 m
Lemons	18.1 m	17.3 m	18.9 m	14.4 m	17.2 m	32.9 m	34.1 m	34.7 m	41.5 m
Mandarins	11.6 m	11.4 m	12.7 m	8.1 m	9.6 m	44.9 m	44.9 m	41.6 m	43.9 m
Navels	5.7 m	5.8 m	5.3 m	2.4 m	3.4 m	26.1 m	26.0 m	25.1 m	21.7 m
Valencia	0.6 m	0.3 m	0.7 m	-	-	52.0 m	52.0 m	48.8 m	58.0 m
Total	45.0 m	44.4 m	47.1 m	32.5 m	38.3 m	171.1m	172.1 m	164.6 m	181.9 m

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