CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY – Jon Roberts

In October 2011 the CGA officially formed a new company which growers of citrus in southern Africa had been requesting for many years - the CGA Cultivar Company. At last CGA members owned their own cultivar company.

The objective of this newly formed company is to provide southern African citrus producers with rapid access to new citrus cultivars at reasonable prices and the associated information necessary to enhance global competitiveness.

In order to fulfil the mandate of the CGA, the CGACC is required to deliver a wide-ranging, service, involving such activities as:

• Cultivar needs analysis with key stakeholders, growers, post-harvest / cold chain and overseas receivers and consumers

• Finding the suitable cultivars that fit these requirements, locally and internationally.

• Negotiating terms with the owners or breeders in an attempt to secure the rights to agency in South Africa.

• Expedite the movement of the cultivar through the Citrus Improvement Programme, quarantine, STG, pre-immunisation, virus indexing & Foundation block

• Control movement of plant material through CIS as stipulated by the ‘Owners’ of the variety.

• Thereafter manage all financial management processes and plant movement procedures.

It is agreed that Cultivar Development was one of the strategic objectives of the citrus industry to meet the dynamic cultivar requirements of the industry in remaining competitive with Southern Hemisphere countries. Up until October 2011 cultivar evaluation and management fell under Citrus Research International (CRI). However in an effort to offer an independent, objective evaluation to all companies, the two activities of Cultivar Management and evaluation were separated. The management and administration of proprietary cultivars is now managed by CGA Cultivar Company ptyLtd. While CRI, a research and technical company, will concentrate on the independent research, selection, breeding and objective evaluation of all new and existing cultivars in South Africa.

Jonathan Roberts has been appointed to manage the CGA CC, and will be assisted by Andrew Lee who was previously the manager of CRI Cultivar Evaluation. This will ensure continuity in the new company.

Since its inception the CGACC has transferred existing management agreements with 24 Owners of natural mutations, of hard and soft Citrus throughout Southern Africa. There have been recent successes internationally as well, with CGACC having recently signed an agreement to manage 5 Californian Late Mandarins, with Eurosemillas, (Master Licencee for the University of California Riverside). Two Late Mandarin triploids from GCM Spain and several rootstocks from both Tucuman and UCR. Confirmation of these institutions confidence in our industry institutions ability to manage these varieties on their behalf.

CGACC is currently negotiating with various foreign companies for a further collection of Lemons, Pommelo’s and rootstocks. Furthermore the CGACC is also currently involved with overseas market reports and feedback of experimental cultivars. In January, February the CGACC was involved with introducing themselves to growers on the recent CGA grower
meetings throughout Southern Africa and was invited to participate in the current Western & Eastern Cape and Natal, CRI Extension Study Group Workshops