During a recent visit to the People’s Republic of China, and following last year’s granting of market access for South African citrus to China, Dr. Graham Barry, Cultivar Development Manager, Citrus Research International, signed an historic technical cooperation agreement with his counterparts in China. Dr. Barry visited Beijing where much of the early groundwork had been laid by his colleagues over the past few years. “The diplomatic inputs from the South African Embassy in Beijing and Citrus Growers’ Association of Southern Africa provided the critical support required to progress long-standing negotiations with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and China’s Citrus Research Institute”, he said.

Dr. Barry reports that “the intention of this cooperation agreement is to provide mutual benefit to both citrus industries. Following the recent opening of the Chinese market to South African-produced citrus fruit, we need to provide further technical support to the Plant Health officials in both countries to fine-tune the import protocol. In addition, cultivar sourcing on behalf of the Southern African citrus industry will be receiving close attention. We have established channels within which to acquire cultivars and germplasm from China on behalf of the local citrus industry, and we urge exporters, growers or cultivar management companies to work with us to optimise cultivar opportunities out of China and to prevent the unwanted introduction of exotic pests and diseases”.

International award for citrus research publication

Earlier this year, Dr. Graham Barry, Citrus Research International’s Cultivar Manager, received an award for the Outstanding Fruit Publication for 2004 from the American Society for Horticultural Sciences. The title of his paper was: Rootstocks and plant water relations affect sugar accumulation of citrus fruit via osmotic adjustment (Barry, G.H., W.S. Castle, and F.S. Davies. Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science 129:881-889).

The publication covered applied research that Graham conducted in Florida, USA and the award is a great encouragement to other horticulturists developing practical solutions to industry problems. Well done Graham!

T G GROUT