Entire fruit crops used for processing juice

Magaliesberg Citrus Company, one of the leading citrus processing plants in South Africa, is based in Brits in the North-West Province. 1.1 million citrus trees are grown by ninety producers exclusively for Magaliesberg's processing facility. This is the only citrus processing factory in South Africa that utilises fruit that are specifically grown for processing. The entire crop is taken regardless of size or outer appearance. Payment for the fruit is done by sampling of every load that is received, and the soluble solids of the fruit determine the value of the fruit.

The former Magaliesberg Citrus Co-operative was established in 1959 as a fresh fruit pack house. Due to marketing difficulties it started processing fruit into juice and concentrates in 1965. Today it processes approximately 50 000 tons of 10 different citrus varieties into ± 3 000 000 litres of concentrate per year.

Due to economical reasons the organisation changed from a co-operative to a public company in 2005. The fruit are mainly grown on the northern side of the Magaliesberg mountain range, as well as alongside the Crocodile River delta that runs from the Hartbeespoort dam.

Magaliesberg Citrus has its own brand name of “Magalies” where products are packed under this label in a range of packing forms, from a 340 ml up to a 1000 l container. Unpreserved products are packed in 1 litre and 3 litre tins.

Magaliesberg has a national privatised depot system through which products are distributed all over the country. Currently there are seven depots with another three planned to cover the whole of South Africa. Export of concentrates is limited due to the strong rand. Only surplus products that are not marketable in South Africa are exported. Oil recovered from the peel is sold locally as well as overseas as the base for industrial flavours as well as perfumes. Peel from the extracting process is sold to a factory that dries the product to be used as cattle feed or citrus molasses.

Magaliesberg Citrus uses the most popular and technologically advanced extraction equipment in the world from the US based company FMC. In the concentration process FMC TASTE evaporators are used. New state-of-the-art centrifuges installed are able to recover the maximum amount of oil from the peel. Produced concentrates are stored in 200 litre steel drums in refrigerated rooms, as well as in a tank that can hold up to 1 300 000 litres of concentrate at a temperature of -15°C.

Quality is a non-negotiable element of the Magaliesberg Citrus factory. Its HACCP accreditation allows product traceability from the farm to the final product in controlling quality. The Company is also certified with ISO 9001:2000 (SGS), complying with high quality standards. Magaliesberg Citrus is also a member of a German based quality controlled system called SGF-IRMA. They also have Kosher and Halal accreditation. Planning is underway for certification in ISO 18000 (Safety) as well as ISO 14000 (Environment). Strict internal quality control measures are implemented in their state-of-the-art laboratory, manned by highly qualified personnel.

A vast range of products are produced with citrus varieties at the base of most of the recipes used. Exotic fruit-purees and concentrates of fruit such as mango, granadilla, litchi, paw-paw etc. are bought locally, as well as overseas in preparing different mixes and recipes. Only concentrated products are produced for the markets. Clients include Clover, Parmalat and Take 5 to name but a few.

Citrus is also an important local crop as a processed product in the form of juice, liquor, oil and cattle feed.
The 1 litre (100% pure fruit juice blends) and 3 litre (Nectar) tins are free from artificial flavourants, colourants, preservatives and substances known to aggravate Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. Thus these products are endorsed by the ADHD Support Centre of South Africa. (www.adhdcentre.co.za)

Magaliesberg Citrus is expanding their mixing and filling facility by currently upgrading their blending capacity with 50% through a R15.5 million capital expenditure.

Magaliesberg Citrus is involved with the Winterveldt Citrus project, contributing to the upliftment of a previously disadvantaged community. Three hundred shares have been donated to the farmer’s co-operative in allowing them to deliver their products to Magaliesberg Citrus Co. The value of the shares is ± R100 000. Magaliesberg Citrus is also involved in assisting the young citrus farmers with production techniques.

The company has a strong sense of responsibility towards the community, and is involved with several old age homes, donating much needed juice supplies on a monthly basis. From time to time, local schools also benefit from this involvement.

Magaliesberg Citrus is truly committed to the development of their staff through ABET participation. The company is also involved in setting the Fruit Processing Unit Standards for the fruit processing industry in association with AgriSeta. Well-trained, creative personnel contribute to delivering the highest quality of fruit juice concentrates available to the market.

In conclusion, it is the vision of Magaliesberg Citrus Company to be the preferred trademark and supplier of quality fruit juice and related products in South Africa. Clearly they are well underway, committed to optimising citrus processing for the good of both the company and the general public.