ClemensGold® has added new zest to the South African soft citrus category as this delicious, deep orange coloured late mandarin has performed well on international markets despite the current challenging market conditions. This recent entry to the global late mandarin offer is the registered brand name for the fruit of the Nadorcott variety that qualifies to stringent quality standards set by Citrogold. The Nadorcott variety originated from an open pollination crossing of a Murcott and Clementine in Morocco and all fruit qualifying to this standard must be packed under the ClemensGold® brand from South Africa, Argentina and Uruguay.

The brand is owned and managed by CitroGold (Pty) Ltd which is based in South Africa and their controlled planting and marketing strategy is sustaining strong demand and good prices for this superior product. During the past three years exports of late mandarins exported have risen by approximately 30% and ClemensGold® accounts for around 85% of that volume.

ClemensGold®'s outstanding features are that it is seedless and is easy to peel. The fruit has an intensely rich flavour with both high sugars and a good sugar-acid ratio. It is flattish in shape and has a thin, exceptionally well-coloured deep-orange skin. ClemensGold® generally matures from mid-June to end-August which is later than any other seedless mandarin. The fruit also has a good shelf life, thus ensuring that they are available in the market from June to September, a period when there are relatively few mandarins available. As this is a branded fruit, the Nadorcott must adhere to stringent quality standards in order to qualify as ClemensGold®. South African producers have granted the rights to plant approximately 1 300 hectares from which they should harvest around 65 000 tonnes by 2013.

“This success of ClemensGold® has been largely due to our ability to offer a superior product coupled with responsible and sustainable planting and marketing,” says Abraham van Rooyen, spokesperson for ClemensGold® and director of Indigo Fruit Farming, a company that specializes in the production of ClemensGold® fruit near Letsitele in the Limpopo Province where the winter sun ripens ClemensGold® to perfection. “Developing and branding a citrus fruit in this way involves considerable resources and time and is always something of a gamble. We are truly grateful that in this case, our efforts are being rewarded,” says van Rooyen. Indigo Fruit produced a total of 7 400 tons of ClemensGold® during the 2009 season.
Abraham van Rooyen and Kate Hlongo of Indigo Farming in the ClemenGold® orchard with a carton of ClemenGold®.

exporting approximately 60% of this. The main market destinations are the UK (60%), Holland and Germany (30%) with the balance going to markets in Russia, China, Middle East, Mauritius and Canada.

Citrogold and the Prestige Mandarin Growers (all South African growers of Nadorcott and two other late mandarins selections called Mor and Or) are planning to focus more resources into the enforcement of the quality standards and also at ensuring that no illegally produced fruit gets sold in the marketplace. "Premium quality fruit also requires premium marketing and thus it is important to supply receivers that share our philosophy. SanLucar is one of our largest receivers in Continental Europe and their inputs regarding the quality requirements of the European clients are invaluable," added Van Rooyen.

"ClemenGold® has a fantastic appearance and eating quality, the consistency and virtually seedless flesh encourages consumers to repeat purchase this product. ClemenGold® has provided the market with a variety upgrade to meet consumer expectations. It has an important place within our range supporting quality objectives for our pillar brands such as Jaffa & Finest. This season ClemenGold® has been part of our Select Variety strategy to delight customers," says David Alba, Tesco Citrus Technical Manager in the UK.

The Nadorcott fruit was discovered by Mr El Bachir Nadori and was selected from a population of Murcott seedlings planted in 1964 at IRNA experimental station near the village of Aflouer in Morocco. Nadorcott was selected due to its ease of peeling and reddish rind colour when compared to Murcott and it was later discovered that seedless fruit were produced when no pollination occurred. Nadorcott was introduced to South Africa in 1995 and only released to growers in 1999. While the patent for ClemenGold® belongs to Citrogold, the Nadorcott Protection Company retains ownership of the Nadorcott plant material. The trees are high yielding and the fruit is medium sized (60 – 70 mm diameter), slightly larger than Clementines and Novas but smaller than Murcott. Consumers are rewarded with its unexpected juicy sweetness and brilliant deep orange internal colouring.

The co-ordinated marketing strategy for fruit under the ClemenGold® brand also extends to the South African domestic market as Indigo Fruit Farming is licensed to market Clemen-

Gold® branded quality fruit exclusively to Woolworths, one of South Africa's premier supermarket chains. A common complaint from South African consumers is that the top quality fresh produce is exported, and that they seldom have access to the country's premium products. "The current programme to Woolworths makes the best branded citrus fruit available on the local market. The programme after three years has a growing avid group of consumers that cannot wait to buy their ClemenGold® fix on a regular basis," explains van Rooyen. As part of Naranje and ClemenGold®'s social responsibility programme, approximately 100 tons of fruit is donated to nursery schools and to our own staff annually," added van Rooyen.

CRI award for young scientist

The national finals of the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists were once again held in Pretoria this year on 2-3 October. For the fifth time, Citrus Research International sponsored a special award for the Best Contribution to Fruit Production in order to encourage school children to take an interest in science that benefits the fruit industry.

This time the award was presented to Andréa Kemp from Rhenish Girls' High School, Stellenbosch for her research into the use of a 25% carbon dioxide shock treatment to delay the ripening of avocados, mangoes, tomatoes and plums. Promising results were obtained and no unusual aftertastes were experienced after treatment.