

[Print this page \(#\)](#)

Black citrus growers get investment venture

Apr 8, 2016 | Nompumelelelo Magwaza

The new Grower Development Company for emerging citrus farmers will help lift dwindling production, according Citrus Growers Association CEO Justin Chadwick.



Zokwana added that emerging citrus growers were still experiencing major challenges with a shortage of skills in production and orchard management, as well difficulty gaining access to credit facilities. File photo

Photograph by: Antonio Muchave

"

It's important to be sizeable in terms of volume to export

"

Participation in the company will also see emerging citrus growers being able to enter the export market.

"The involvement of black people in the fruit industry in the past was mainly confined to that of being a worker or a vendor. The creation of this company will hopefully increase meaningful participation of an historically disadvantaged group in this sector," Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana said at the launch of the enterprise recently.

He added that emerging citrus growers were still experiencing major challenges with a shortage of skills in production and orchard management, as well difficulty gaining access to credit facilities.

There are currently 118 black growers who farm 7000ha. The majority of them are in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape.

"The Growers Development Company will specifically assist in addressing these and other factors that contribute to dwindling citrus production numbers," said Chadwick.

The new company is the transformation arm of the Citrus Growers Association and will receive about R14-million in investment from the association.

He also commented that the establishment of a specialised development company would help bring black citrus growers into the mainstream of the agriculture economy.

"Many well-intended land redistribution and restitution initiatives have resulted in degenerating farms due to a lack of skills and governance knowledge among beneficiaries," he said.

The CEO added that it was important for emerging exporters to have large volumes with which to do business.

"It's important to be sizeable in terms of the volume to export. It is a volume game, after all. If you are too small then buyers will not buy from you."

~ o O o ~

