

“Optimism and hope are not the same thing. Optimism is the belief that the world is changing for the better; hope is the belief that, together, we can make the world better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope an active one. It needs no courage to be an optimist, but it takes a great deal of courage to hope” - Jonathan Sacks

HOPE VERSUS OPTIMISM

It is amazing how one day can make a difference – for some reason the move from 31 December to 1 January is marked by renewal; we feel that everything is restarting and we can wipe the board clean and begin again with new hope.

And so we start the new year with hope – an active belief that, working together, we can make 2024 a great year for all involved in the South African citrus industry – a year in which we all can thrive. Towards the end of '23 and the start of '24 I have had the privilege of travelling to the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Limpopo, and there is definitely a sense of hope in the industry. The people that I have met confirm that we all work together to make this industry thrive.

My hope is one of wealth for the industry and wealth for South Africa. Some measure wealth in terms of possessions, but there is a wider definition of wealth. Where citizens can drink water from the taps with no fear of disease – that is wealth. Where citizens can go to public hospitals and be treated with dignity and receive first-class attention and care – that is wealth. Where citizens can walk freely after dark without fear of being accosted, raped, robbed or murdered – that is wealth. Where the roads are maintained to a standard that ensures the safety of motorists and pedestrians – that is wealth. Where there is obvious pride in the place where we live which can be seen in well-maintained buildings, no litter and beautiful gardens – that is wealth. Where schools provide excellent education, with appropriate discipline and values – that is wealth. Where public transport is safe, efficient and available – that is wealth.

South Africa has one factor that sets it apart from many other countries in Africa – active citizenry.

Everyday, regular people have taken responsibility to make a difference, to make government and others in positions of leadership more accountable. Active citizens need to make all South Africans wealthy.

Let us enter 2024 with hope and play a role in the different platforms and organisations that have been established to safeguard our interests – and to create the wealth that we all strive for.

From an industry point of view, we all hope that 2024 builds on some of the green shoots of revival we saw in the 2023 season – better market conditions, improvements in infrastructure and logistics, and easing in the cost chain. We will all play our part to ensure a thriving southern African citrus industry, to embrace the opportunities that a growing industry holds. We will work closely with value chain partners, with government, with all who have an interest in our wonderful industry.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

The CGA wants to ensure that all members are receiving information through the different CGA channels. The CGA App is a single entry point (for more contact Paul Hardman ph@cga.co.za); as is the CGA website www.cga.co.za; on a weekly basis this newsletter is sent to over 3 000 members and stakeholders; on a bi-monthly basis the SA Fruit Journal is posted to all growers; the grower roadshows will be held towards the end of February 2024 (with the CGA Citrus Summit in 2025). In March the first Citrus Marketing Forum (CMF) will be held, with “mini” CMF’s held monthly throughout the season. On social media CGA is found on X, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. If grower members are not getting access to any of this information, please contact tanya@cga.co.za.