

Thursday 1 April 2021 [**Day 370 of Lockdown: Day 32 Level 1**]

COVID 19: Memo 45 to Growers

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Dear Growers

On 27 March 2020 South Africa went into hard lockdown. As an industry this was of great concern; our industry was just beginning with our export season. The labour intensive nature of the industry made it that much more vulnerable: sick people could not work and had to quarantine, those in contact with sick people had to isolate. What would happen if those harvesting fruit fell ill, and (more likely due to working in confined spaces) what would happen if packhouse staff fell ill? As predicted, the first wave of infections peaked at the very peak of the citrus export season.

Due to the precautions taken by growers and packhouses very few workers actually fell ill, and packhouse closures were few, with those that did close down being put back into operation quickly. You should all be applauded for your efforts.

But here is the bad news – we are going to have to do it all again, and even be more diligent in 2021. Please do not suffer from COVID fatigue, up your game in 2021 and we can make it another successful season. At least in 2021 we sort of know what we are in for. As the experts say, stick to the basics. If you monitor your staff BEFORE they enter the workplace (and send any slightly symptomatic people home); if you make sure your staff sanitise and sanitise and sanitise; if you make sure that your staff wear their masks AT ALL TIMES; and if you ensure physical distancing, then you are doing all you can to ensure that your business is protected. There are no changes to the Guidelines in the Workplace – but to jog your memory this is the link for the Covid-19 workplace resources and guidelines:

<http://www.citrusresourcewarehouse.org.za/home/document-home/covid-19/covid-19-workplace-resources>

In addition, your COVID Compliance Officer remains your most valued employee – maybe an e-learning refresher would be a good idea. The Citrus Academy is still offering an e-learning course for Covid-19 Compliance Officers. The course covers Covid-19 guidelines and regulations, workplace risk management, workplace control points and actions, and recordkeeping and reporting. The cost is only R345 per person. To register, please go to www.citrusacademy.org.za.

CGA COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE (CRC): The CRC has been reconvened in 2021, consisting of five directors (Cornel van der Merwe (Chairman Onderberg), Hennie Ehlers (Sundays River Valley), Jan Louis Pretorius (Letsitele), Piet Engelbrecht (Senwes) and Gerrit van der Merwe (Western Cape)); CGA and Citrus Academy staff and new additions from FPEF (Anton Kruger), PPECB (Lucien Jansen) and DALRRD (Mooketsa Ramasodi).



P.O. Box 461
Hillcrest, 3650
Unit 7 – 22 on Main,
22 Old Main Road,
GILLITTS 3610
Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa
Tel: +27 31 765 2514
Fax: +27 31 765 8029
Email: info@cga.co.za

The CRC has already met three times in 2021 (January 28th, February 25th and March 24th), and will meet next on 29 April 2021. **If there is anything that growers wish to raise with the CRC please mail me on justchad@iafrica.com.**

At the first meeting the CRC considered the final risk dashboard from 2020 (see below). The CRC's mandate is to look at risks associated with COVID; however, sometimes the CRC addressed issues not COVID related. It was agreed to continue with the risk dashboard; however, non COVID related issues would be referred to the appropriate person/entity.

The scoring in the risk dashboard (below) is based on **impact** and **probability**. The scoring is out of ten – with ten being high impact/high probability. All items above 30 were assigned an action and follow up. The orange and red blocks were obviously the highest risk items.

For 2021 the CRC will add another measurable: **ability to influence**; a score of ten means that CGA has a high level of influence. This risk dashboard will be updated on a weekly basis (once the season begins); and the high risk items will be addressed.

ORANGE HEART FRUIT DRIVE: In 2020, more than 1,500 tonnes of citrus fruit were donated through the Orange Heart Fruit Drive to households that became vulnerable to food shortages due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Food shortages will continue to be a challenge to many households in South Africa, and we again need your help to play our part in addressing this challenge. The CGA has created a platform, on the Orange Heart website, where growers and packhouses can pledge their support for the coming season. Donations will be distributed through Food Forward SA this season. For more information, please visit www.orangeheart.co.za/fruit/ or contact sive@citrusacademy.org.za.

ORANGE HEART VACCINATION DRIVE: Covid-19 has caused massive damage to the South African economy and is still creating great uncertainty. We all need to work together to bring back a measure of normality as soon as possible, and the best way to do this, is to fast-track vaccinations. The Department of Health is currently working on developing a vaccination rollout plan. The citrus industry can help in two ways – by pledging to contribute financially to the cost of vaccines for their own staff, and secondly, by making available a farm clinic or other facility where vaccines can be administered. Finding and securing sufficient facilities is the greatest priority at the moment, and we need to gather information on available sites. Please go to www.orangeheart.co.za/vaccine/ to register your interest in participating, or contact sive@citrusacademy.org.za.

BUSINESS FOR SOUTH AFRICA: Every two weeks Business For South Africa hosts a one-hour webinar on topics relevant to COVID 19. Two weeks back the webinar covered employees' rights and the vaccination rollout (with an excellent background on the virus itself). Growers are urged to spend an hour on this webinar to understand their rights in terms of vaccinating workers; and getting more information on the vaccination roll out.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_imTmDWcYc

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Directors: C van der Merwe (Chairman), B J Vorster (vice Chairman), C J de Waal (vice Chairman), G L Hall, G E van der Merwe, J E Danckwerts, M R Woodburn, P A Bristow, P S Noddeboe, M T Bester, P Dempsey, A A Muller, G B Whitaker, C Rossouw, G P Engelbrecht, E Nohamba, B S Malungane, J S Pretorius, S le Roux, J L Pretorius, G P Engelbrecht, H L Ehlers, T Landman, V B Titi-Msumza, R Govender

	24/4/20	30/4/20	7/5/20	14/5/20	21/5/20	28/5/20	4/6/20	11/6/20	18/6/20	25/6/20	2/7/20	9/7/20	16/7/20	23/7/20	30/7/20	6/8/20	13/8/20	20/8/20
Farm Worker +ve	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	100	100	100	100	80	80	80
Farm availability inputs and services	30																	
Farm workers - interprovincial transport			40	40	40													
Packhouse input and services	64																	
Inspection Services DAIRRD PPECB	56	56	64	64	64	64	64	80	80	80	80	100	100	100	80	70	50	30
Packhouse worker +ve	49	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	100	100	100	100	80	80	80
Farm Packhouse transport workers	35	35	35	35	35													
Diesel shortage						80	80	80	80	80	80	80	40					
Transport Criminal activities						42	42	42	42	42	42	80	80	64	64	64	64	32
Transport Border Post												64	64	80	40	40	40	40
Transport Cost												64	80	100	100	100	30	30
Transport Congestion												48	80	100	100	50	60	60
Transport Availability Vehicles												42	80	80	80			
Cold Store worker tested +ve	56	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	100	100	80	80	80
Cold Store Space Availability	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	32	72	72	72			
Inspections Pre Clearance		72	72	72	72													
Shipping Availability empty containers	64	64	64	64	64							48						
Port worker tested +ve	56	80	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	60	60	60
Port communication	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56						
Port Efficiency		80	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	50	40	40
Markets Closure wet market	42	42																
Market Availability and Price competing products	32																	
Market Volatility			56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	80	80	80	80	40	40
Markets General low demand				80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	56	32	32
Documentation SARS/BOL	50	50	50	50	50													
Documentation Issuing Phyto	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50						
Documentation acceptance phytos	30											50	50	50	50	30		



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MENTAL WELLNESS: Just over a year ago we got sight of how life would be living during a pandemic. The hard lockdown (level 5) was due to last for three weeks; many hoped that life would then return to normal, but most knew that we were in for the long haul.

A year later we are more prepared for the inconveniences and stress caused by the reaction to the pandemic – and the tightrope that government walks to protect lives and livelihoods. An often overlooked impact of the lockdown is on mental health. A Discovery Health presentation revealed some interesting statistics – in the health fraternity income earned by orthopaedic surgeons dropped by 8% after COVID (mainly due to people delaying elective surgery); radiologists dropped by 12%; general practitioners dropped by 22% (people did not get sick and also did not want to go to doctors rooms – my wife is a pharmacist and says that the sales of antibiotics and cold and flu medicines dropped off dramatically) and paediatricians by 19%. Conversely, pathologists' income increased by 11% (more testing) and **psychologists increased by 6%**. It is important that we all become aware of the impact of COVID-19 on mental wellness; be that little bit more tolerant and understanding of others. People react differently to change; some take it in their stride while others take strain.

EASTER: I would like to take this opportunity to wish all growers a Happy and Restful Easter. Please stay vigilant, keep clear of super spreader events and remember to keep masks on in public places, practice physical distancing and sanitise regularly.

Staff Cell numbers: Justin Chadwick 083 654 9591; Mitchell Brooke 082 892 9455; Paul Hardman 082 880 7933; Deon Joubert 083 675 3785; Robert Miller 084 510 5961; Gloria Weare 084 512 5578

Justin Chadwick