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## SCSA plots seasonal path

Summer Citrus from South Africa hosts 'successful and positive' planning session ahead of upcoming season



**N**ow in its twentieth year serving the US with fresh citrus during the summer months, Summer Citrus from South Africa (SCSA) has shared the highlights from the association's recent planning session in Citrusdal, South Africa.

Boet Mouton, SCSA's chairman of the board of directors, explained the importance of importer partners to continue to deliver on the association's promise to provide deliciously sweet tasting citrus fruit during the summer months, which complements the US production season.

In addition, the chairman is seeking to increase sales of easy peelers and mandarins while driving demand through carefully constructed promotional plans with retail partners.

South Africa is the second largest exporter of citrus globally and in light of this, Mouton's ultimate goal for the overall programme in 2019 is to increase market share for the country's fruit in the US

According to Gerrit van der Merwe Jnr, member of the SCSA board of directors, growing in Citrusdal is the heart of the country's citrus production and, after emerging from a three year drought, the growers of SCSA are looking for the "first proper citrus crop without any water restrictions," underlining the association's excitement around the potential of the upcoming season.

Looking ahead, van der Merwe anticipates significant growth in Mandarin production in the future.

Featured speaker Erin Meder, general manager of Capespan North America, affirmed the significance of a cohesive grower model, defining South Africa's grower collaboration as a "self-regulated honour system" with a unified voice, providing accurate information and quick evaluation to solve industry challenges.

As a result, importers are able to provide a healthy supply of popular citrus to retail partners in the US from June to October, while also providing an "elevated level of quality in both flavour and appearance".

From a marketing perspective, Megan Zweig, vice-president of DMA Solutions, explained the importance of branding SCSA during the summer months both to retailers and consumers alike.

She explained how important it is to position fruit from South Africa as exotic and "special" when merchandising to the US as product that will produce a "unique experience" for shoppers due to the exceptional sweetness, high quality and overall value.

Mayda Sotomayor-Kirk, chief executive officer of Seald Sweet and one of the original champions of SCSA's collaboration underlined the significance of the farming work being done in Citrusdal by SCSA farmers.

She stated how the group is built on a foundation of collaboration, state-of-the-art sustainability practices and logistics solutions, and went on to share how challenging the US market can be.

As a group focused on supplying the US market with citrus fruit from South Africa, she encouraged the stakeholders

to see how the opportunities outweigh the challenges.

Chris Cockle, senior director of imports for Wonderful Citrus was present as an importer of SCSA, to share insights on the overall summer citrus category, provide a category outlook for the future and to provide an overview of the upcoming summer season for the Halos brand.

Suhanra Conradie, chief executive officer of SCSA, concluded the planning session.

"As an association now in its twentieth season serving the US market, we have faced a lot of challenges," said Conradie. "By facing those challenges, we've established a successful model of collaboration and must not forget the lessons we've learned.

"We need to stay at the forefront of where the market is going and innovate along the way. What some view as a group of competitors, both on the production and importing side of our business, must be viewed as a collaborative effort with one mission in mind and that is to provide our friends in the US with a stable and high quality supply of citrus during the summer months."