



sundays river citrus company

THE SRCC TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING KEY COMPONENTS:

- Ownership
- Participation
- Education
- Community Upliftment

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SRCC's

Transformation Times

VOLUME 9

DECEMBER 2017

SRCC / IKAMVA LETHU EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

...the story of the hare and the tortoise!!!

Remember the story about the race between the hare and the tortoise?.....well, it would seem that we have a similar situation on our hands with this unique empowerment project!!! The hare embodies our enthusiasm and excitement in wanting to get started on the project in the shortest possible period of time, while the tortoise represents the dogged determination and insistency to ensure that all the requirements are complied with and in place before we can commence!

Although we fully understand the process and the need for it to be thorough and comprehensive, we are disappointed that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is taking so long to complete. As a result of the requirement to address all issues identified and raised around the establishment of a citrus farming operation on the property which was purchased for this project in the Sunland area, we are probably now about 6 months behind our planned schedule. Enter the tortoise.....with heads down and taking firm and determined steps we will now aim to reach our revised project commencement date by the end of October 2018!

Fortunately, the project participants, which now consist of 20 committed citrus farmers who are all shareholders in SRCC, have clearly declared their hare-like enthusiasm for the project along with their tortoise-like determination to ensure that it succeeds. From the ranks of these 20 citrus growers, a Project Steering Committee has been elected, which has effectively taken over managing the various aspects of the project. Current focus has been almost entirely dedicated to managing the successful progress of the EIA process and finalization of the legalities relevant to the company structure as well as the farm worker Trust Deeds. Because of the uniqueness of the nature of this project these legal and documentary matters too have taken longer than expected to complete.

Enter the hare....as more meetings and discussions have been held so the realization that the project represents an outstanding opportunity to make a difference in our business and industry in the valley has become clearer and the levels of enthusiasm have been embedded amongst the participants. This group of citrus growers will provide an estimated R210 million of funding with which to establish the approximately 700 hectares of citrus—which translates into nearly 350,000 citrus trees, ultimately producing an expected volume of over 50,000 tons of citrus products once they are in full production!

The real benefit of this outstanding project is the fact that 300-350 permanent farm workers, many of whom have been in the service of this group of 20 citrus growers for many years, will be shareholders in this substantial farming business and will receive annual dividends from the future profits to be generated. Also taking up shares in the business will be the SRCC permanent packhouse workers in a Trust to be established, as well as the future Ikamva Lethu permanent farm workers who will also be members in a trust of their own. The overall ownership of the business held by these three groups of historically disadvantaged workers will be 60%. The 20 citrus farmers (35%) along with SRCC (5%) will hold the other 40%.

You will also remember that eventually..... the tortoise won the race!!!!

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Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises: The 2017 Season Overview

The 2017 season was a challenging one indeed and generally resulted in a significant drop in crop volume along with reduced prices in the export market, especially for navels and lemons. Inflation and rising costs have placed many farming businesses under pressure. Overall, SSE volumes are 11.4% down but revenues are expected to be around 38% less than last year. Although crop prospects look reasonably good for next season, cost management and productivity will be of paramount importance during the coming year.

Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises: Siyaphambile Farm

The building of the house for the assistant farm manager has been completed on Siyaphambile Farm (see below).

Crime has been a challenge this season, with theft of fruit and Eskom cables being the favourites, as well as breaking down and stealing of the building material while the building of the assistant farm manager's house was in progress!!

Because water needs to be very carefully managed, a new water system was installed at Siyaphambile Farm for household use and drinking water, as seen below.



..... the house of the Assistant Farm Manager recently completed.



Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Glengrove Farm

Replanting was done in two orchards and the lemons were replaced with midknights.

Glengrove, together with Sophumelela and Siyaphambile, received assistance from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform by way of pest control chemicals, which is of course much appreciated.

Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Siyathemba

The suction pipe of the dam was upgraded at Siyathemba, as seen below, which has resulted in much improved water storage and utilization.



Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Sophumelela

On Sophumelela Farm, all the windbreaks have been removed for water utilization purposes and chopped up for mulch, which has been distributed under the trees in the orchards to assist with fertilization.

Replanting has also been done in two orchards.

Sundays River Farming Trust (SRFT) / Sikhula Sonke Enterprises : Willowtree Farm

The expansion and improvement of the existing dam on Willowtree Farm has been completed. A new fence was erected surrounding the newly built store, as seen below and all the windbreaks were also removed around the store.

The old pumphouse equipment next to the dam was moved to a large, new pumphouse to facilitate the needs of the newly expanded dam.

As an experiment, a new variety, “Willowtree Long” lemons, is being planted on Willowtree. Although results will take some time to be assessed we look forward to future success in this regard?

Willowtree Farm has very kindly been assisting with the maintenance of the school ground of the Sundays River Valley Primary School, by making available the use of its earthmoving equipment - a meaningful way to provide support to the community.



The new shed, as seen on the left and below.

The new fence, as seen below



Luthando Farm experienced a particularly tough season with crop volumes having dropped significantly in comparison to last year. The drop in revenue as a result of both volume and export price reduction has delivered a challenging financial position for the year which increases pressure on cost management for the season ahead.

The roof of the shed on Luthando Farm was renovated so that the shed can be used for storage. (as seen below)

A new staff member, Cindy Charles, was appointed during the year to provide support with the administrative duties.



Mbuyiselo Plase (Pty) Ltd

Mbuyiselo also experienced a difficult year and is in much the same situation as the other farms—reduced volumes and revenue, with resultant focus having to be applied to costs for the 2018 season.

At Mbuyiselo Plase, as with the other farms, the AET Training, assessment and exams are ongoing amongst its staff. Fertilisers and chemicals were also received from DAFF and CGA, with much gratitude.

Applications have been submitted to the Department of Water and Sanitation for financial support on water use and for the upgrade of the irrigation system and the outcome is eagerly awaited.

It must be said that the positive relationships with the above-mentioned Departments are highly appreciated as well as the support received from them.



Accreditation and Training

SIZA Ethical Audits for 2017 took place earlier this year, when seasonal workers were present on the farms, which went very well. As from 1 March 2017, audits were done online on the SIZA platform. This allowed SRCC to prepare for audits as well as to submit corrective action evidence on behalf of growers on this platform. Changes in the SIZA standard, however, now requires each farm to submit an SAQ (Self-Assessment Questionnaire) annually – if that farm is due for an Ethical Audit that year or not—so the bar is continuously being raised!

In preparation for Globalgap Audits, the annual blood tests were done at the farm clinics for all workers coming into contact with chemicals in any way.

AET Training, assessment and exams are still ongoing as learners progress in their various levels and an encouraging improvement is noted in class attendance and pass rates.

Clinics & Wellness Program

The farm clinic which was built at Mbuyiselo Plase with the support of Albert Heijn Foundation and Capespan funding, is now fully in use and is of great benefit to the Mbuyiselo farm workers.

The Wellness Programmes continued from August onwards on all the farms and were once again very successful. Voluntary testing was done for all workers interested, by professional nurses under controlled circumstances. All workers who attended the Wellness Testing Days were tested. A total number of 578 farm workers were screened out of 701 workers during the 7-day Wellness Drive held at the Masifunde Sonke Training Centre and Luthando Farm. From here, the worker is sent to a clinic if a chronic medical condition is diagnosed, to receive their medication on a regular basis.

The outcome of the Wellness drive was very positive as it led to positive referrals with good feedback and immediate management of the medical condition. Due to the marketing of wellness and health care, more workers are taking charge of their own health and, in comparison with 2016, there was an improvement in the rate of new infections.



SRV Informal Sports Tournament

In September, an informal Sundays River Valley (SRV) Sports Tournament took place on the grounds of the Sundays River Valley Primary School, where 5 netball and 6 soccer teams, consisting of Sikhula Sonke Enterprises and Luthando Farm staff, competed against each other.

The results were as follows:

Winner of Netball – Siyathemba Farm

Winner of Soccer – Glengrove Farm

The enthusiastic support of the spectators added to the success of the day.



SRCC FOUNDATION

The SRCC Foundation has been busy again all year with its commendable efforts of upliftment within our surrounding communities. A brief summary of its activities in the fields of education, health and environment so far this year are as follows:

Education:

School donations—several donations totalling R88,500 made to schools in the valley

School bus— bus known as “Kids on the Move” has been introduced with the assistance of the Engeli Group to assist with transportation of school children in and around the valley

Mobile library—Repairs to one of the mobile units of R14,000 to enable this worthy initiative to continue

Eisteddfod— R20,000 donation to assist with the running of the inter-schools Eisteddfod

Masiphathisane Creche— assistance with maintenance and operational costs of this crèche in the Kirkwood area to ensure continued care of these children to Grade R

Bursaries—With the assistance of the Engeli Group, bursaries to the value of R100,056 were awarded to deserving scholars to enable them to receive schooling in some of the better schools in the valley

Health:

Soup kitchens— two soup kitchens viz Bubele and Centre of Hope were supported throughout the year

Vitamin Tablets— Vitamin tablets have been provided for a number of years to SRCC Packouse personnel as supplements to their basic diets and to assist them to meet the challenges of their work during the season.

Environment:

Recycling of Waste— The Waste Trade Co has established itself in the valley and has recently moved premises to a site near the Moses Mabida Township. The Foundation was instrumental in achieving this and has assisted with a variety of initiatives to encourage a recycling discipline in our valley. Although much work still needs to be done the valley has already seen the benefit of recycling.

SRCC hosts an “Oesfees” on an annual basis, celebrating the achievements of their producers during the past season. For the second year now, SRCC has decided to match the sponsorships received from their suppliers and agents towards hosting this event and these funds have again been donated to the SRCC Foundation Trust for much needed funding for our community projects. We are both delighted and sincerely appreciative of a fantastic donation of R250,000 received after the recently held “Oesfees” which will go a long way to meeting the upliftment objectives of the Foundation!!

The companies which generously donated are as follows:

APL Cartons	CJ Transport	JBT	Origin Direct	Wilco Tpt.
ABSA	De Groot	Harris and Abuseedo	Quadfin	SRCC
Battlio	Fit Safety	LabelPro	Santam	
Beva Fruits	GPB Consulting	Linde	Sun Valley Tpt	
Capespan	HG Molenaar	M.Nurse	Sunfare	
Citrosol SA	International Tube	MSC	Westcape	



CITRUS GROWER DAY

On the 28th of September 2017, the CGA and the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform presented a Citrus Grower Day on Willowtree Farm, where numerous speakers shared information on their respective areas of expertise. Some of the subjects discussed, were CBS control by Mr. Andre Combrink, Head of Agronomy, SRCC; Irrigation Scheduling by Mr. Graham Delmar from Humansdorp Kooperasie; Spring Pest Complex by Mr. Wayne Kirkman from CRI; Excessive fruit drop in the Sundays River Valley by Mr. F Joubert from Humansdorp Kooperasie; Bioscience products by Mr. Keith Danckwerts and Cultivars by Mr. Jonathan Roberts from CGACC.

Expected problems for the coming season were also discussed including the importance of sanitation.

Dr. Sonandi, the Director of Extension at DRDAR, delivered a message of support. This successful information day was well attended by citrus producers from the Sundays River Valley.



LUTHANDO ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY

During the year, Mrs. Patricia Jacobs, mother of one of the scholars as well as the Chairlady of the school's governing body, informed the joint body, of which Luthando Farm is part, of an urgent need for food for grade 12 scholars from Moses Mabida High School in Kirkwood.

Mrs. Nokwanele Mzamo, General Manager of Luthando, assisted with buying groceries and fresh produce, as seen below. Mrs. Mzamo also visits the scholars from time to time to offer assistance with their school requirements and needs.



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Farms photos courtesy of Rudi le Roux
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SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY CITRUS PRODUCER FORUM

The Sundays River Valley Citrus Producer Forum has been formed and was launched on the 6th June 2016 at The SRV AGRI dinner held at Africanos Country Estate. The forum has been formed to include all the producers in the valley and is taking the lead role in establishing a partnership with local and provincial government to ensure and assist with service delivery.

The Forum met shortly thereafter with The Premier of EC and some of the MEC's in East London. The purpose of the meeting was to enlist the help of the Premier in establishing and setting up a partnership with local government to start the rejuvenation program in the Valley that the premier is launching.

The Forum has enthusiastically been attending to repairing and cleaning existing facilities and was informed of a leaking pipeline, as seen below left, behind the Police offices on the way to Valencia township in Addo, which also affected the Addo Heights entrance to The Addo Elephant National Park. Tree root systems were strangling the pipeline which was supplying water to the township of Valencia, thereby disrupting the water supply and resulting in no toilet or washing up facilities. The Forum restored the water supply, as seen left, to the Valencia Hall and surrounding households, following a two year disruption, which was highly appreciated by the community.

Pictured with The Honorable Premier, centre bottom right, Dr. Konanani Liphadzi, CEO : Fruit SA, left ; Ms. Juliette du Preez, Vice Chairperson : CGA Development, right.



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