

# The South African Fruit Juice Association

By Rudi Richards, General Manager of the South African Fruit Juice Association (SAFJA)



**Rudi was Chairman of the SA Fruit and Vegetable Canners Association.** Prior to that he was responsible for Tiger Brands' exports and, previously, the export division of Langeberg Foods.

SAFJA was established in 2011 to address issues of importance on a national basis. A key focus has been engagement with the Department of Agriculture to upgrade existing fruit juice regulations in line with international standards, to ensure level playing fields and adequate consumer protection. The association will continue developing the regulatory environment with the Departments of Agriculture and Health. This includes establishing the necessary inspection and testing capacity to ensure compliance.

The fruit juice industry is well integrated with international markets through substantial export and import trade. Industry currently processes more than one million tons of fresh fruit annually and total juice turnover is in excess of R10 billion. Of this, 75% is sold on the domestic market.

The balance (which represents a significant export sector)



covers a range of products including concentrates, blends, pulps, purees and final products exported worldwide. In this regard, substantial exports to sub-Saharan Africa are of particular importance. In South Africa, short- and long-life juices are sold in various categories. There are specific regulations, definitions and standards for each class of fruit juice. It is important to note that there is a large variation, from fresh fruit juices to fruit drinks.

As the industry operates significantly in its own domestic market, it is largely driven by developments in this market. Real

GDP growth is currently relatively low. Conversely, the current consumption of fruit juice products indicates potential for long-term growth as consumption in the USA and Germany is approximately 44 litres per capita, whilst in South Africa it is approximately 12 litres per capita. This will, of course, require increased income per capita, which will be achieved over time and should increase the demand for higher-value processed foods.

The juice industry in South Africa, as in other parts of the world, faces challenges in growing its markets. On the one hand, it is imperative to develop the regulatory environment to protect the juice market from unfair competition and malpractices. In addition, this market needs to be promoted with fact-based information backed by research in order to embrace the positive attributes of fruit juices. SAFJA has an important role to play with regard to promoting its domestic and export markets.

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