



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019



2018 will go down as a watershed in the history of the South African Avocado Growers' Association (SAAGA), with a record export crop of 20,8 million 4 kg cartons, beating the previous high of 14,8 million by some margin. The South African avocado industry has also started to move into the realm of 12-months supply, with some growers finishing off their 2018 crop whilst others start 2019's harvest.

**W**ith the 2018 volumes also came the reality of oversupply, and has reinforced the risk of being Eurocentric in our approach to marketing.

Market access remains SAAGA's top priority, with a large portion of the budget and resources being directed at opening new markets. In most cases, market access moves slowly at governmental level, to this end fellow Board member and SAAGA's incoming Chairman Sizwe Magagula has joined the SAAGA Market Access Steering Committee and is currently working on forming relationships at senior governmental level. As a Board we feel that this will be key to unlocking and finalising steps to new market access.

We are excited to announce the launch of the SAAGA Avocado Production Guide, an application that has been developed by our Technical team with the assistance of Dr Elsje Joubert. I would like to thank all for the completion of this project. Besides practical production and technical information, the app will also be used as a communication platform to keep growers up to speed regarding important industry events and information, such as developments on market access, study group dates, transformation and marketing.

Local market development remains a priority on our Key Performance Area (KPA) radar, and the Board is confident that Protactic are the right partners to assist in achieving our goals in the development of this important sector.

Transformation initiatives such as internship programmes, student bursaries, mentorship of emerging farmers, involving emerging farmers at our commercial study groups, and highlighting successful transformation projects within the avocado industry

will remain, and gain increasing importance on the SAAGA budget and agenda.

The importance of our regional study groups has been highlighted on many occasions. I would like to thank the Area Directors, Subtrop technical staff, as well as the various study groups and technical committees for raising the bar during 2018.

The Board believes that the current Subtrop staffing structure is robust and flexible enough to achieve our stated KPA's. We are, however, aware that technical team visibility is lacking in some of our production regions and will be addressed during 2019.

Our 2018 SAAGA income exceeded expectations, in the main due to our record crop and, despite SAMAC's exit from within the Subtrop umbrella, our Association finds itself in a healthy position.

I would like to thank the Subtrop staff for the effort that they put in to keep SAAGA ahead of the pack. I would also like to thank the Area Directors, who ensure that their regions are well represented at SAAGA Board level. A special *thank you* must go to Kosie Eloff who is stepping down after serving on the SAAGA Board for the last 10 years.

To our members, thank you for your continued support, and helping to maintain the high standards that are expected of a "mature" association.

Lastly, congratulations to Sizwe Magagula, our incoming Chairman, and to Clive Garrett who assumes the role of Vice Chairman.

*Athol Currie*

