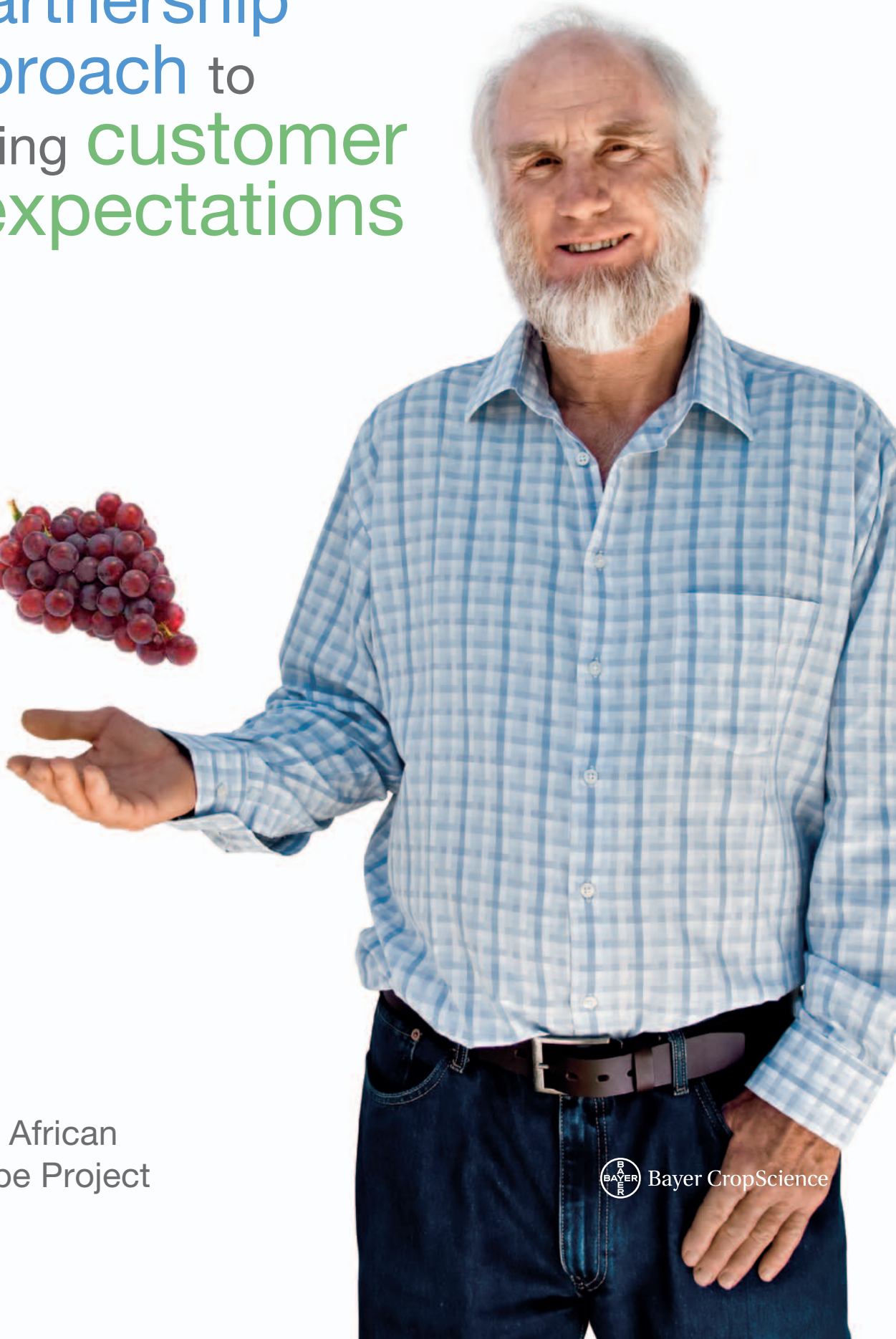




A partnership
approach to
delivering **customer
expectations**



The South African
Table Grape Project



Bayer CropScience

How it all started

South Africa is one of the world's leading producers and exporters of table grapes. This high-quality product is exported to various countries around the world. The UK market, in particular, is an important destination for South African table grapes. UK consumers attach great importance to food safety, environmental sustainability and produce of consistently high quality. High standards and strict requirements are in place to ensure that South African table grapes meet these expectations.

Two and a half years ago, MACK Multiples, one of the UK's leading fresh produce importers, came across Bayer CropScience and at the Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong introduced EXSA, an important South African table grapes exporter, to its food chain partnership concept.

EXSA was impressed with Bayer CropScience's experience and progress in various food chain partnership projects around the world and immediately saw the benefits of being part of the programme. Upon their return to South Africa, EXSA and Bayer CropScience continued their exchange and eventually decided to transfer food chain partnership to South Africa and start the first pilot projects in two table grape production areas in the Western Cape (Trawal and the Hex River Valley).

What we aim to achieve

The aim of these projects was to produce excellent quality table grapes which meet the strict quality requirements of UK retailers. This was to be delivered by applying a crop protection programme that not only optimised the use of plant protection products, but ensured it complied with principles of Integrated Crop Management (ICM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Within this frame, the partners agreed that they would work together, first to adhere to the Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) established in the European Union, and second to reduce the level of residues in the final produce, where this is possible, but without compromising on crop quality.



Who is involved

Agrochemical distributors:

Nexus (Gene Kilian) and Wenkem S.A. (Barnard Steyn)

These two distributors play a key role in the distribution of Bayer CropScience crop protection products in the Western Cape of South Africa. Their expertise and experience make them a vital food chain partner in ensuring that the table grape production process is of the highest possible standard. Through effective crop protection programmes, monitoring, technical inputs and support they add value to South African producers.

Producer: Leon Viljoen

Leon Viljoen, one of the shareholders of EXSA, produces table grapes in Trawal (80 hectares) and the Hex River Valley (127 hectares). As a producer, he requires a dynamic crop protection programme for high-quality table grapes that meets the demanding standards of the market and ensures optimum yields.

Exporter: EXSA

EXSA, a dynamic grower-owned export company founded in 1996, is in control of the entire marketing chain from production and packing to delivery to their customers in markets such as the UK, Europe, Middle East and the Far East. EXSA believes in sustainable practices, investing in new varieties, packing innovation, flexibility and social responsibility.

Producing superior quality table grapes and meeting their customers' demands remain the aims of this export company. Though mainly exporting table grapes, EXSA has also exported small volumes of EXSA-brand citrus to key customers in the past few years.

EXSA values the partnership with a world-class crop protection company like Bayer CropScience in order to obtain the best possible crop solutions for their producer base. Knowing and managing the residue profile of the table grapes they sell, enables EXSA to be a confident and reputable exporter.

Importer: MACK Multiples

MACK Multiples is one of the UK's leading fresh produce importers and suppliers to the retailers. Product quality and food safety are therefore important requirements to ensure customer confidence.

Bayer CropScience provides integrated sustainable crop solutions that add value to the marketing of South African table grapes in export markets all over the world. Bayer CropScience's comprehensive offering comprises a strong and well-balanced portfolio of crop protection products and services targeted towards meeting customers' needs. In this regard Bayer CropScience focuses on innovative active ingredients and new modes of action, the development of new products, increased yields, improved crop quality and improved resistance management, as well as seeking new approaches in biological crop protection.



The confidence-building solution

Crop protection programme: At the beginning of the season a crop protection programme was developed collaboratively covering all possible scenarios in terms of pest and disease pressure. This programme bundles expertise from EXSA, Nexus, Wenkem and Bayer CropScience local technical experts and, amongst others, includes innovative Bayer CropScience products such as Teldor® (for botrytis), Melody Care® (for downy mildew), Confidor® (for mealy bug), Prosper® and Flint® (both for powdery mildew) with the aim of replacing chemistry with a less environmentally friendly profile.

Monitoring and optimisation: Continuous monitoring and inspection of the vineyards throughout the growing season enabled the adaptation of the outlined worst-case scenario to actual conditions in the field. Targeted applications at most appropriate timings ensured maximum efficacy on the pest and/or disease whilst having the least possible impact on beneficial fauna and limiting the amount of active ingredients on the fruit to what is strictly necessary. Multi-residue analyses were carried out by an accredited laboratory to confirm the residue profile of the fruit prior to transportation in order to avoid unwanted surprises at the destination.

Community management: This project involved various partners along the food value chain with varying areas of interest: Bayer CropScience as an agro-chemical company, agrochemical distributors, producers, EXSA as the exporting company and MACK as importer and interface to UK retailers. Constant communication and open feedback has been proven fundamental for establishing best possible operating procedures.



At the back:

Barnard Steyn: Distributor from Wenkem
Ewan Krige: Food Chain Manager (Bayer CropScience)
Leon Viljoen: Producer and Shareholder of EXSA

In the front:

Petrie de Kock: Area Manager Vines (Bayer CropScience)
De Witt Kamfer: Technical Manager of EXSA
Poen Jordaan: Producer and Shareholder of EXSA



What we achieved

The initial pilot projects were used to establish and determine the best operational working procedure, and to ensure that the relevant parties in the food chain understood their roles and responsibilities. Facilitating and maintaining relationships, good communication strategies and the effective management of information were key focus areas.

The table grapes produced in the food chain partnership projects met the strict quality requirements laid down by MACK Multiples. Through technical support, monitoring and pack-house inspections, the table grapes delivered to MACK Multiples were characterised by good taste, colour, berry size, internal quality, eating quality and shelf life.

Innovative Bayer CropScience chemistry such as Teldor® (for botrytis), Melody Care® (for downy mildew), Confidor® (for mealy bug), Prosper® (for powdery mildew) and Flint® (for powdery mildew) allowed iprodione, mancozeb and chlorpyrifos to be entirely replaced in the crop protection programme. The fruit fly and mealy bug populations were clearly monitored by means of trapping and scouting.

De Witt Kamfer, technical manager at EXSA, summarises: “It is important for us to be associated with a reputable and world-class company such as Bayer CropScience. This relationship enables us at EXSA to be at the forefront of the latest crop protection technology, better understand and manage the individual products within the crop protection programme, and adhere to the quality requirements laid down by MACK Multiples.”



Next steps

The feedback from all partners involved was very positive and even exceeded the initial expectations and goals set. All partners are committed to expanding the food chain partnership concept and making it an integral part of their business strategy. Through the food chain partnership concept, a “peace of mind” concept was established among all the partners involved.

EXSA is planning to extend the concept to all their table grape producers in the Trawal area, and to involve even more producers in the Hex River Valley area.

De Witt Kamfer closes: “The pilot projects were successful and the aim is to deliver commercial volumes. The plan is to continue working with MACK Multiples as the UK importer.”



left:
Ewan Krige
Food Chain Manager
of Bayer CropScience

right:
Leon Viljoen
Producer and Shareholder
of EXSA



Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food chain partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



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