



## Categorising Citrus Farmers and Citrus Cultivars

According to various studies, farmers (and other businesses) can be grouped into one of four different categories, viz. Experimental (10%), Early Followers (15%), Late Followers (60%) and Laggards (15%). Each category of farmer has different approaches to farming in general and more specifically to levels of risk with experimental farmers being more open to taking risks. When it comes to making choices of which cultivar to plant and how much, it could be that the experimental farmer would be more keen to try something new, while the late follower would take a 'wait and see' approach.

While Citrogold, acting as a developer and manager of citrus cultivars, does not want to 'break the speed' of 'experimental' and 'early follower' farmers it also wants to act responsibly to the citrus industry. Therefore, in order to make it easier for growers to make decisions when choosing cultivars to plant, Citrogold has categorised all their managed cultivars into 4 groups, viz. Experimental, Potential, Semi-Commercial and Commercially Recommended. Following is a description of these categories:

### A. Experimental

These are promising new cultivars that have been recently discovered or bred. Normally 5-10 trees will be top-worked to this cultivar in different production areas of the country. The purpose is to:

- test the performance of the cultivar in different climatic regions
- test for true-to-typeness of the cultivar
- do preliminary quality and market tests
- act as a demonstration site to prospective growers

In most cases the bud wood has been through STG (Shoot Tip Grafting), indexed for diseases and pre-immunized with a mild strain of tristeza virus.

### B. Potential

At this stage the cultivar is planted as nursery trees, normally on different root stocks. From 100 trees up to 1 hectare are planted. In addition to the aforementioned points, further tests include the following:

- Compatibility on different rootstocks
- Internal and external quality
- Shipping trials
- Shelf life
- Market acceptability

### C. Semi-Commercial

At this stage, if the cultivar has performed satisfactorily, the growers will be recommended to make semi-commercial plantings of not more than 30% of the variety in which the new cultivar falls. For example if the new cultivar was a navel selection - and an interested grower had 100 existing hectares of navels - then the grower would be advised to plant no more than 30 hectares of this new navel cultivar.

During this semi-commercial evaluation period the following medium and long term points are investigated by researchers, extensionists, growers and marketers:

- Ideal rootstock combinations
- Detailed micro climate suitability
- Soil suitability
- Commercial shipping protocols
- Detailed marketing requirements

### D. Commercially Recommended

At this point most production and marketing nuances of the cultivar are known and growers can - with little or no risk - plant the cultivar with success.

