

South African citrus shipments challenge geopolitical disruptions in the Middle East

South Africa's citrus season is rapidly gaining momentum, with **fruit now beginning to flow steadily to markets in the Middle East**, which account for 19 percent of the country's total citrus season exports.



In a press release, the [Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa](#) (CGA) said current pressures on exporters are confined to marginally longer transit times and higher shipping costs. However, the industry body was adamant that there is no material diversion of South African citrus volumes to alternative markets away from the Middle East.



"Early consignments have already arrived in Middle Eastern markets, taking somewhat longer to reach destination due to adjusted shipping routes, but all feedback indicates that quality is holding up well," said Boitshoko Ntshabele, CGA CEO.

Demand in Middle Eastern markets remains in line with expectations, according to the industry body, and South African suppliers remain committed to servicing customers in the region.

All shipping lines are accepting container bookings and moving cargo via alternative routes put in place following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. These rerouted services involve **longer shipment times and higher costs**, but they have been essential for maintaining access to Middle Eastern ports.

A moving target for citrus exports



The CGA notes that the situation remains fluid and could change as the season progresses. The organization says it's closely monitoring logistics, transit times, costs, and market dynamics, as well as developments in global supply to the Middle East from other regions.

"While conditions may evolve, South Africa's position for now is clear: **fruit destined for the Middle East is being shipped to the Middle East**, and supply to these customers remains a priority unless the situation alters dramatically," Ntshabele concluded.

**All images courtesy of CGA.*

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