

South African citrus industry welcomes AGOA but notes lack of impact

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 6 February 2026

The country's citrus industry says this week's inclusion of South Africa in AGOA will make no material differences to prospects for exports to the US



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The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has said that, while it welcomes the recent reauthorisation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for one year, it will not materially impact the tariff regime for the country's citrus exports to the US

Based on the prevailing legal interpretation, the tariffs imposed by the White House take precedence over AGOA benefits, CGA suggested.

As a result, AGOA's renewal does not, at present, alter market access conditions for local citrus exporters.

The CGA said that in November last year, in a positive development, oranges were granted an exemption from the 30 per cent US tariffs, allowing them to enter the market duty-free.

"This development provided welcome relief to South African orange growers, particularly in the regions that are heavily reliant on the American market, such as the Western and Northern Cape," it noted.

However, mandarins were not included in this exemption.

"South African mandarins have proved to be popular in the US," the industry body continued.

"Thus a 30 per cent tariff on mandarins is expected to negatively affect mandarin growers in the Western Cape and Northern Cape during the 2026 season, which is set to start in April."



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"Applying tariffs to mandarins risks creating price spikes, supply shortages, and inflationary pressure in the US," explained Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, chief executive of the CGA.

"South Africa supplies mandarins counter-seasonally to America, so we do not threaten US production or jobs.

"In fact, we help keep consumers interested in the category year-round with our high-quality and healthy citrus, handing the consumers over to fellow growers in states like California and Florida at the end of our season," he said.

Entire South African communities depend on South Africa-US trade, with Citrusdal standing as a clear example of how significantly local livelihoods are tied to continued access to the US market.

"Given all the complexities, the AGOA extension currently has no meaningful effect on growers' planning for the coming season," said Gerrit van der Merwe, the chairperson of the CGA.

"The situation remains somewhat uncertain. This underscores the need for a stable and mutually beneficial trade agreement between South Africa and the US."

Van der Merwe said that unlike AGOA, the future of which is periodically uncertain, a dedicated trade agreement could provide both South Africa and the US with the predictability they urgently require.

“Unimpeded access to the US citrus market remains a priority for South Africa’s citrus sector,” he concluded.

