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Citrus sector welcomes Agoa extension

6TH FEBRUARY 2026 BY: SABRINA JARDIM - SENIOR ONLINE WRITER

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has welcomed the recent reauthorisation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa) for one year.

In a media release, the association says, however, that this extension does not materially impact the tariff regime for South African citrus exports to the US.

Based on the prevailing legal interpretation, the tariffs imposed by the White House take precedence over Agoa benefits. As a result, Agoa's renewal does not, at present, alter market access conditions for local citrus exporters, says CGA.

CGA points out that, in November last year, in a positive development, oranges were granted an exemption from the 30% 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.

However, mandarins were regrettably not included in this exemption. The association says South African mandarins have proved to be popular in the US.

CGA thus notes that a 30% 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 around April.

"Applying tariffs to mandarins risks creating price spikes, supply shortages and inflationary pressure in the US.

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

“In fact, we help keep consumers in the category year-round with our high-quality and healthy citrus, handing the consumers over to fellow growers in states such as California and Florida at the end of our season," says CGA CEO Dr **Boitshoko Ntshabele**.

CGA posits that entire communities depend on South Africa-US trade, with Citrusdal – a town in the Western Cape –

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.

"The situation remains somewhat uncertain. This underscores the need for a stable and mutually beneficial trade agreement between South Africa and the US," says CGA chairperson **Gerrit van der Merwe**.

He noted that unlike Agoa, whose future 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, says CGA.

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