

South African orange exports tracking behind 2025

South Africa's orange export season tells a story of weather challenges, geopolitical constraints, and the prolonged presence of Egyptian Valencias. "It's certainly been an interesting season thus far," comments a grower who asks not to be named. "We've already lost fourteen days of harvesting in the Eastern Cape because of rain. We've definitely fallen behind our usual schedule. We're hoping to catch up with the later navel varieties."

So far this season, orange exports are between four and five million cartons (15kg) behind the equivalent period last year.



© Carolize Jansen | FreshPlaza.com *Navels at an outdoor market, London, June 2026*

A few big packing weeks of navels are still ahead before it tapers off, while the peak Valencia season is still roughly a month away.

The European Union has been the main destination for South African oranges (3.2 million cartons, still more than a million below where it stood a year ago. The biggest difference noticeable with regard to orange exports concerns the Middle East, which had last year already received over three million cartons while this year, by week 26, the million carton mark was in sight. This brings down the Middle East's share of South Africa orange exports from 27% YTD 2025 to 13% this year.

Breaking it down to category level, by week 26 the Middle East's share of South African navel trade shrunk to 11% from 26% last year. Sizing of the crop could, the grower adds, have played a role alongside the disruptions to shipping routes and the cost implications thereof.

Europe's share of navels grew by 4% to 40%, but the market took a long while to warm up because of Egypt's lingering presence. North America has also shown an increase at this point of the season, with the USA claiming 15% and Canada a hefty 10% of the navel pie, compared to 10% and 5% respectively YTD 2025.

A lighter navel crop is expected from the Western and Eastern Cape, and the export season will probably end earlier than usual.

Valencia exports only recently kicked off and thus far, only from the north of South Africa. As with navels, the Middle East's 18% share (YTD) is half of what it was twelve months ago, while early Valencia shipments to Europe constitute close to half of all volumes so far this season.

Nevertheless, he says, Valencias are tracking way behind last year with limited volumes loaded to Europe. High rainfall is associated with quality challenges, and when it comes to Europe, exporters tread very carefully.

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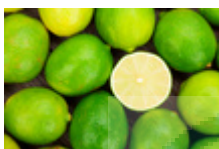
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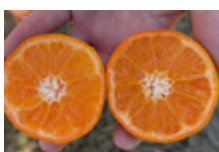
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