South Africa calls for continued U.S. tariff-free citrus access

Ahead of a U.S. public hearing on proposed tariffs scheduled for 7 July, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has called for continued tariff-free access for South African citrus, arguing that the trade benefits both growers and U.S. consumers.

According to Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the CGA, oranges currently remain exempt from the temporary 10 per cent global tariff framework introduced after a February 2026 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, while mandarins, grapefruit, and lemons remain subject to the tariff until at least 25 July.

In addition, a Section 301 investigation could result in a 12.5 per cent tariff on imports from 54 economies, including South Africa. The proposal is currently under public consultation, with hearings scheduled for 7 July.

Ntshabele said South African citrus complements, rather than competes with, U.S. production because exports take place during the Northern Hemisphere off-season.

"Our export season runs counter to that of the northern hemisphere, meaning that when U.S. orchards are out of production, South African citrus helps keep supermarket shelves stocked."

According to the CGA, this counter-seasonal supply helps maintain product availability, reduces price volatility, and supports demand for citrus throughout the year. The organisation also notes that South African citrus imports support jobs throughout the U.S. supply chain, including ports, logistics, distribution, and retail.

The association argues that the tariff exemption already granted to oranges should be extended to other citrus categories, including mandarins. South African mandarin exports to the U.S. have more than tripled over the past decade.

The U.S. remains an important export destination as South African citrus production continues to expand following long-term investment in orchards and farming infrastructure. According to the CGA, future production growth will require access to multiple export markets, including the U.S., Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The organisation also points to rising production and logistics costs linked to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, together with winter flooding in parts of South Africa, as additional challenges facing growers during the 2026 season.

The CGA maintains that preserving tariff-free trade in fresh citrus would support South African growers while maintaining year-round supply for U.S. consumers and retailers.
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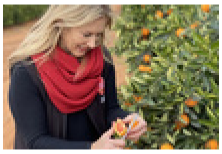

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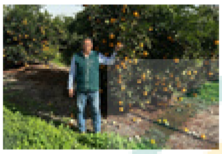

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