Zimbabwe projects 18% increase in orange production

Zimbabwe's citrus industry is expecting higher production in 2026 following favorable rainfall during the 2025/26 summer season, improved irrigation water availability, stable electricity supply, and phytosanitary support, according to the Horticultural Development Council (HDC).

Lemon harvesting and packing for export are already underway. The HDC said harvesting of soft citrus and Valencia oranges will begin shortly, with growers expecting a good-quality crop. Packhouses in Mvurwi, Mazowe, and Dunhill are already handling lemons, navels, and soft citrus. In southern production areas, growers expect to pack around 160,000 cases of grapefruit and between 1.5 million and 1.8 million cases of Valencia oranges, depending on export market conditions.

The HDC said higher costs for shipping, fuel, and packaging continue to affect profitability. "These are squeezing profit margins, resulting in lower-grade fruit that previously found export markets now increasingly becoming uneconomic to pack," the council said.

Zimbabwean citrus is exported to the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Malaysia, while new markets are emerging in East Africa and Eastern Europe. The HDC aims to expand the country's citrus area from 4,000 hectares to 8,000 hectares by 2030, subject to an investment of US$48 million, creating an estimated 24,000 jobs. Zimbabwe has not yet started exports to China despite the citrus trade protocol signed four years ago.

According to the Crop, Livestock and Fisheries Assessment 2 report, orange production is forecast to increase 18 per cent from 188,960 tons in 2024/25 to 222,138 tons in 2025/26. Planted area is expected to increase from 4,724 hectares to 5,166 hectares, while yields are projected to rise from 40 to 43 tons per hectare. Lemon and lime production is forecast to increase 11 per cent to 7,462 tons.

Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency data show citrus export earnings increased 49 per cent to US$3.21 million between January and May 2026, while export volumes rose 59 per cent to 14,783 tons. Grapefruit exports recorded the largest

increase, followed by fresh oranges and lemons, and limes. Total citrus exports have grown from US$7.82 million in 2017 to US$15.12 million in 2025.
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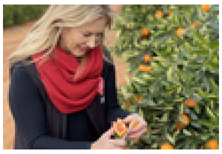

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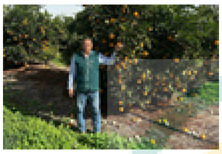

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