

Stefaan Marais – Crownfruit

First South African Valencias will find the Far East to be slow

The first Zimbabwean blueberries of the season arrived by mid-May, and feedback has been good, says Stefaan Marais of Crownfruit. "Currently we're going through a low-volume week, so demand is still higher than supply."

Singapore-based Crownfruit mainly supplies Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, along with Cambodia, Hong Kong, as well as the Indonesian islands and some other markets. "Inflation in all three of our main markets was below 1.5% in 2025: Singapore had deflation, Thailand too. The latest inflation figures across Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are around 2% thus far in 2026."

It might be a bit early to make pronouncements on the strength of these economies given geopolitical turmoil. "Adjustments on fuel prices were probably the most sudden shock, and will have an effect on food prices. In Singapore, though, the majority of people travel with public transport, and Malaysia subsidises their fuel as they produce their own. There have been adjustments to our freight rates, but much less than to the Middle East. From Egypt we saw delays as some growers only shipped via the Cape of Good Hope, but we could still get with certain lines via the Red Sea at very reasonable delivery times."



© **Crownfruit**"Zimbabwean blueberry growers always find a way"

Blueberries are a category that grows year by year, and Zimbabwe's timeframe of supply fits perfectly in between the early South African growers and the later Moroccan growers, he says. "Logistics is always a challenge from Zimbabwe, but they somehow always find a way!"

Right: Crownfruit's blueberry brand Peppy

Avocados are a big item in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand – Hass rather than Fuerte – and Crownfruit's buyers prefer Australian avocados to South African or Kenyan fruit. The latter, he says, "usually has lenticel damage upon arrival, so our markets rather pay higher for the Australian avocado. We have trialled South African avocados, and will do so again, but the market still prefers Australian fruit."

Pushback to high lemon prices

The floods in South Africa have not strongly impacted Crownfruit's citrus supply to date. "Our product mainly comes from the northern parts of South Africa. As we understand, the Valencia crop is expected to be big, so it might just equal each other out."

Egyptian oranges are still arriving, but loading has, from a South African point of view, fortunately stopped. "Egypt ended at much lower levels than previous years, and we definitely had later arrivals. Our peak was in May, compared to previous years when it usually fell in April."

He adds that orders have been fewer than usual. "It could be the effect of Egypt's Valencias still floating in the market at cheap prices, which customers first want to finish."



© Crownfruit

Egyptian strawberries

The first South African oranges are due in Singapore at the end of June, and he reckons it's going to be a challenging season. "The expectation of early Valencia from South Africa is still high (US\$4 to US\$5 higher than Egypt's prices). Our customers still prefer Valencia." He's anxiously excited to see how the orange campaign unfolds. "The Malaysian and Singaporean markets have not been great during the past two to three weeks," he observes, "so demand for product overall has been low."

He continues: "Our lemons grew by 90% from previous years, and that is also in line with the industry growth to our markets. There were far fewer Chinese lemons sent to our markets, and we saw growth in both Egyptian lemons as well as South African lemons. The prices were also very high. Only recently have we been seeing a pushback from the market."



© Crownfruit

Crownfruit's current supply includes Valencias from Egypt, left, and strawberries from the United States



For more information:

Stefaan Marais

Crownfruit

Tel: +65 8655 9769

Email: stefaan@crownfruit.sg

Publication date: Thu 11 Jun 2026

© FreshPlaza.com / Carolize Jansen

-
-

Related Articles → See More



- **International growth depends on protecting the brand promise at home**



- **Yellow vein chlorosis virus forces Murcia's and Alicante's citrus sectors to uproot lemon trees**



- **"Structural crisis grips the lime market as market dynamics shift"**



- **Argentina's lemon exports surged in the first four months of 2026**



- **Japan probes unauthorized sale of citrus saplings in China**



- **Florida landowner Alico completes exit from citrus**



- **Limited domestic supply keeps import lemon pricing strong**



- **Peru exported 36,500 tons of Valencia oranges in 2025**



- **First South African Valencias will find the Far East to be slow**



- **Norway to bring 6,000 oranges to World Cup**

