

South Africa raises 2026 lemon export forecast

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 22 June 2026

The CGA has increased its lemon export projection by nearly 4mn cartons following favourable growing conditions



Image: Adobe Stock

In recent years, South Africa's lemon category has enjoyed significant growth when it comes to exports.

The country's citrus organisation has now adjusted the 2026 lemon export crop forecast, reflecting the dynamic and somewhat unpredictable nature of the current season.

South Africa is now expected to ship a revised 49.4mn cartons, almost 4mn cartons more than the first estimate.

Following a meeting of its Lemon Variety Focus Group, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) said the adjustment is largely attributed to favourable growing conditions across key production regions.

"Although the season started later than usual, three significant cold fronts accelerated fruit colour development, contributing to improved readiness for export," The CGA stated.

"Increased rainfall in many lemon-producing areas has resulted in a positive growth curve, supporting larger fruit sizes, ultimately resulting in higher carton volumes.



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from South Africa
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The association emphasised that strong coordination, effective communication, and logistical capacity across the value chain will assist in managing the increased volumes.

"These efforts aim to ensure a steady and stable supply of fruit to global markets, preventing under- and oversupply at any given time."

Packing activity remains concentrated in key regions, with Senwes, Patensie, and the Boland currently accounting for the bulk of volumes still to be harvested.

Regions that have recorded the most significant increases in their projections include Letsitele in Limpopo and the Sunday's River Valley in the Eastern Cape.

"Despite higher overall volumes, the updated forecast indicates a shift in the seasonal profile," the CGA noted.

"The lemon season is expected to conclude more abruptly than usual, with a noticeable drop in volume around mid-July, rather than a gradual tapering off."

The CGA also confirmed that fruit quality for the season remains "excellent", reinforcing South Africa's reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality citrus to international markets.