Southern Africa's freight news by ftw

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Lemon export forecast rises by 3.6 million cartons

23 Jun 2026

South Africa's 2026 lemon export forecast has been revised upward following favourable growing conditions across key production region. Source: Syrio

South Africa's lemon export crop is expected to be larger than initially forecast, with the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) revising its 2026 export estimate upward by 3.6 million cartons.

Following a meeting of its Lemon Variety Focus Group, the CGA increased its forecast from 45.8 million to 49.4 million 15kg cartons, citing favourable growing conditions across key production regions.

The higher estimate is expected to result in additional export volumes moving through the citrus logistics chain during the remainder of the season.

Although the season started later than usual, three significant cold fronts accelerated fruit colour development, while increased rainfall in many lemon-producing areas contributed to larger fruit sizes and higher carton volumes, the CGA says.

Packing activity remains concentrated in key production regions, including Senwes, Patensie and the Boland. The most significant upward revisions to production estimates were recorded in Letsitele in Limpopo and the Sundays River Valley in the Eastern Cape.

The CGA said strong coordination, communication and logistics capacity across the value chain would be important in managing the increased volumes and maintaining a steady supply of fruit to export markets.

Despite the higher crop estimate, the association expects the season to conclude more abruptly than usual, with volumes forecast to decline sharply around mid-July rather than taper off gradually.

The CGA also reported that fruit quality remained excellent, supporting South Africa's position in international citrus markets.