

South African lemon deal will end 'abruptly' with higher volume



By [Mike Knowles](#) | 26 June 2026

Citrus Growers' Association updates export forecast after cooler weather and rainfall accelerate fruit development across key regions



Image: Fruitnet

South Africa's latest lemon export deal appears set to finish earlier than first expected, after a succession of cooler weather periods and increased rainfall resulted in the crop's faster development.

According to the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA), the most recent adjustment came after a meeting of its Lemon Variety Focus Group.

At the same time, the country's lemon exports volume for 2026 has been revised upwards, and now stands at 49.4mn 15kg cartons, up from the previous estimate of 45.8mn.

"This is a testimony to the dynamisms and somewhat unpredictable nature of the 2026 export season," CEO Boitshoko Ntshabele wrote. "Our expectations are such that the lemon season will conclude more abruptly than usual, with a noticeable drop in volume around mid-July, rather than a gradual tapering."

At the time of writing, Ntshabele said packing activity remained concentrated in key regions, with Senwes, Patensie, and Boland accounting for the bulk of volumes still to be harvested.



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Regions including Letsitele in Limpopo and the Sunday's River Valley in the Eastern Cape had recorded the most significant upward revisions in their projections, he noted.

"Importantly, what was reported from the production regions is that key areas have shown continued favourable growing conditions for the lemon crop, and this despite the season being later than usual," he continued.

"Further, reporting noted that there was a marked acceleration of fruit colour development, due to no less than three cold fronts, which also

contributed to the fruit being ready for export.

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

He concluded: "The season has been eventful in many ways thus far, and with a number of curve balls thrown at us all. But besides that, we remain focussed on success in whatever ways we can achieve it."

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