

Cautiously more optimistic outlook for South Africa citrus exports to the U.S.

Citrus exports from South Africa to the U.S. are still a few months away, but planning is in full motion. Things look different from last year. While there is still some uncertainty around tariffs, the outlook is more optimistic. "Last year, South Africa citrus growers continued to show their commitment to the U.S. market," says Suhanra Conradie with Summer Citrus from South Africa. "We had already planned our volumes, logistics, infrastructure, etc. when the tariffs were announced." Normally, that planning process structures the season, but things played out differently and structure got replaced by uncertainty. Despite the tariffs, South Africa continued to ship fruit to the U.S. market, showing how serious they are after more than 25 years of exporting to the U.S.

"At the start of the season, we could have never imagined that 2025 would become a record year for us." A big challenge was turned into an opportunity as the season concluded with record volumes, mainly driven by the orange category. "We shipped a little more than we normally do to the U.S. market as a result of a healthy crop matching the demand of the market."



© Summer Citrus From South Africa

Oranges exempt from tariffs

As the 2025 season concluded, the news was received that oranges will be exempt from tariffs. While this doesn't mean it's business as usual, it is a bit easier for the economics to make sense, which will also help the overall program and shipments to the U.S. "This means we are back in business for 2026, and we can start having conversations with shipping lines, retailers, and other supply chain partners about the upcoming season." Overall, Summer Citrus from South Africa will continue to manage the demand in the U.S. based on available supply. "I am a big believer in creating awareness for our products and if the demand is there, there is always room to send more fruit," shared Conradie. South Africa is fully counter seasonal to U.S. production and therefore, will start shipping once the domestic season has ended.

Further reductions on tariffs

When the news towards the end of February was announced that tariffs into the U.S. are now down to much more reasonable levels for all our products (including Easy Peelers, Star Ruby and Lemons), the conversation with U.S. importers and retailers became a lot easier. "When looking ahead at the 2026 season from a production point of view, we expect a very normal crop on all our fruit types." However, Conradie acknowledges that production volumes depend on different elements, including weather. South Africa has a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and winter rainfall, which are ideal conditions for producing a perfect piece of fruit.



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Weekly arrivals

The group has invested a lot of energy and time in getting the supply chain focused on the U.S. From a shipping perspective, Philadelphia is the main hub for perishables and citrus from South Africa will continue to arrive on both sides of the Delaware river. Dedicated conventional break bulk vessels will arrive on one side and the container service on the other side. The container service will pretty much be a standalone service from MSC. "These shipping options combined should allow for weekly arrivals into the U.S. market, providing consumers with fresh, sweet, and delicious citrus. Providing consumers with high quality fruit has been our strength and continues to drive our success in the U.S. market. We as a group will soon be ready to start sharing initial timing and volume updates with the trade."

Click [here](https://www.summercitrus.com/trade-newsletter/?utm_campaign=11744790-2025%20Trade%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--p2X2pYca7TIGRb-WZnzUvRuFWF8ns5aTdhthGXFdwLKalCwtSDAcyIh-rvfh4p0nYBLuLCcwWND8vDAybae4RiiBKOa&_hsmi=25694420&utm_content=25694420&utm_source=hs_email) (https://www.summercitrus.com/trade-newsletter/?utm_campaign=11744790-2025%20Trade%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--p2X2pYca7TIGRb-WZnzUvRuFWF8ns5aTdhthGXFdwLKalCwtSDAcyIh-rvfh4p0nYBLuLCcwWND8vDAybae4RiiBKOa&_hsmi=25694420&utm_content=25694420&utm_source=hs_email) to sign up for Summer Citrus' trade newsletter.

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