

South African citrus exports reach 209 million cartons as mandarins stabilise

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has released its late Mandarin export estimate for the 2026 season, confirming that there is stability in production in the category. Overall, the numbers show a slight decrease compared to last year's late Mandarin export figures, and represent a stabilisation after consecutive years of strong growth.

Late Mandarins are not included in the industry's first-round estimates because of their later harvesting window, and are released about a month after the initial projections for other citrus categories. All estimated figures relate specifically to citrus expected to be available for export.

Within the late Mandarin category, the Leanri variety continues to show modest growth, increasing to an estimated 2.6 million 15kg cartons, up from 2.3 million 15kg cartons last year - representing a 13% increase.



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Orri volumes are slightly lower, at an estimated 2.4 million 15kg cartons, down 11% from last year's 2.7 million 15kg cartons.

The "other late Mandarins" category shows growth of 11%, rising from 3.6 million 15kg cartons last season to an estimated 4 million 15kg cartons this year. This increase is driven predominantly by the Royal Honey Murcott (RHM) variety.

The largest late Mandarin category, Nadorcott/Tango, shows a small decline of 1.6% - from 31 million 15kg cartons in 2025 to an estimated 30.5 million 15kg cartons this season. This decrease is largely attributable to marginally lower expected crop figures in the Eastern and Western Cape compared to last year's exceptionally strong performance in those regions. The Western Cape accounts for about 36% of the Nadorcott/Tango category, while the Eastern Cape contributes around 23%, meaning that together they represent nearly 60% of total volumes, and any regional variation in these two provinces has a notable impact on overall projections.

Chairman of the CGA Mandarin Focus Group, Hendrik Warnich, said: "The figures reflect a relatively steady position. There are no massive changes, really. It should be said that this is, of course, an estimate, and there are a lot of variables at play. One significant variable is the situation in the Middle East, where both demand and transit times are expected to be affected. We are monitoring the situation, and the CGA will provide regular updates to growers."

With the late mandarin figures now included, the CGA can provide a complete

export estimate for the 2025 citrus season. Southern Africa is expected to have approximately 209 million 15kg cartons of citrus available for export, representing a 2% increase compared to the packed-for-export figure for 2025, which was 203.9 million 15kg cartons.

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