

South African grapefruit growers expand European push

By [Carl Collen](#) | 6 May 2026

South African growers are scaling their campaign across Europe, entering France and the Netherlands while expanding German operations



Image: Citrus Growers Association

SummerStar Ruby Grapefruit growers have officially launched the 2026 European summer campaign, expanding into new European markets and scaling retail and digital activity following what was described as a "strong debut season".

Backed by a coalition of growers within the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA), the initiative aims to reposition grapefruit in Europe.

Last year the group launched a new brand, SummerStar Ruby Grapefruit, with a mandate of shifting perceptions from bitter and old-fashioned, to sweet and tangy and relevant for young and modern consumers.

Participating growers contribute voluntarily to a collaborative marketing fund to help drive long-term category growth.

The 2025 campaign targeted Germany and focused on digital brand-building, growing awareness through influencer marketing and public relations, and building strong partnerships within the supply chain.

“Last year was about fundamentally changing how consumers see grapefruit through clear, consistent messaging,” said Nicci Stewart, SummerStar Ruby marketing lead.

“We positioned SummerStar Ruby as sweet, tangy and incredibly versatile.

“It’s not just a breakfast fruit, but something consumers can enjoy throughout the day, from post-workout snacks to salads and cocktails,” she outlined.

Early indicators suggest the strategy is gaining traction, the coalition pointed out, with “positive sentiment across media and social platforms, and increased engagement from retail and supply chain partners”.

The campaign also coincided with a strong export season.

South Africa packed 15.3mn cartons of grapefruit in 2025, a 7 per cent increase on the previous year, supported by favourable growing conditions and stable pricing.

This year the growers are expanding in Germany, while also setting their sights on new markets in France and the Netherlands.

Retail partnerships will play a central role, with in-store promotions across all three markets designed to establish SummerStar Ruby as a recognisable consumer brand.



**SummerStar Ruby
grapefruit**

QR-coded stickers have been pasted on individual fruits, linking shoppers to a language-specific landing page containing recipes and product information.

All promotional activity will be tracked to measure sales impact and optimise future campaigns.

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“We’re moving from awareness to action,” said Stewart. “This year is about converting interest into consistent purchase behaviour.

”Digital activity will also scale, with even more engaging content on our owned channels and an increased investment in high-performing content creators across food, health and lifestyle.

“Last year our influencer content received over 9mn views and tens of thousands of engagements and likes,” she confirmed.

A user-generated recipe competition has also been launched on social media to encourage consumers to experiment with grapefruit in multiple ways over the summer.

The expansion comes as export volumes are expected to rise by a further 16 per cent in 2026.

While it remains early to quantify the full commercial impact of the campaign, growers believe the category is at an inflection point.

“We’re seeing meaningful shifts in perception, alongside growing engagement across the value chain,” said Barry Landman, chairman of the Grapefruit Variety Focus Group.

“From the outset, the growers aligned around a single goal: urgently change how grapefruit is perceived, particularly among younger consumers.

”What started as a bold repositioning effort is now evolving into a scalable growth platform for grapefruit in Europe,” he explained.

“I’m pleased with the direction and believe that the foundations are in place for SummerStar Ruby to become a staple of the European summer.”