

Eddy Kreukniet (Exsa Europe):

“Severe weather brings Eastern Cape lemon supply to a standstill”

In a citrus market update, the severe weather currently affecting South Africa cannot be ignored. "In the Eastern Cape, South Africa's largest citrus-growing region, rainfall has reached as much as 500 to 800 mm. Farms close to the rivers are heavily flooded, with infrastructure damage as well. Conditions are also poor in the Citrus Valley and the north, so very little citrus is expected to be shipped this week and next," says Eddy Kreukniet of Exsa Europe.



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Fortunately, large volumes of lemons were shipped to Europe over the past two weeks. "At the moment, there has been a slight oversupply on the European market, but that is convenient now," says Eddy. "The lemon market has been strong for a long time. Spain had far fewer lemons, and South Africa responded very well to that with strong prices."



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Tangerine transition weeks

The tangerine market is currently in a seasonal transition. "Some customers still prefer the last Spanish and Moroccan Nadorcott, while others have already switched to Satsumas and Primasol from Peru and South Africa. That always creates some uncertainty, because the market needs time to adjust again," says Eddy.

"We are currently seeing low supply, especially from Peru, where volumes are 50 per cent lower than last year. South Africa has loaded slightly more fruit, but overall, there are fewer mandarins on the market. So far, this has had little effect on prices, especially as mandarin consumption has not been particularly strong in recent months."

Shortage of hand oranges



© Exsa Europe b.v."In hand oranges, we are really seeing shortages on the market at the moment. Spain still has some available, but volumes are limited, and prices are very high. South Africa is therefore entering a favourable market with a good Navel crop. The first shipments were due to be loaded this week and next, although the impact of the bad weather remains uncertain."

"Valencias are still widely available from Egypt. Although the season is now nearing its end, there are enough juicy oranges to supply Europe in May and June. Prices are also attractive, creating good promotional opportunities, because I do not expect those prices to rise in the next six weeks, and it will still take a few weeks before South Africa enters the market."

"Last but not least, South Africa has a good grapefruit crop, although it arrived slightly later than expected. Larger volumes were shipped last week, so in about three to four weeks, there will be a peak in the market," says Eddy.

Two hotspots

Finally, he points to two major issues hanging over the citrus market. "First, there are Trump's tariffs, with people unsure about the situation. Then there is the conflict in the Middle East, which is complicating fruit supply chains and transport options. Fortunately, exports to the Middle East have not come to a complete halt;

otherwise, the impact on the European market would have been even greater. But the situation has become much more complex and expensive. As a result, conditions continue to change from day to day and week to week."



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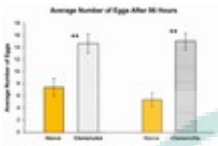
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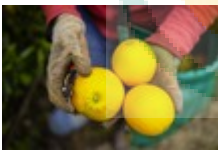
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- **"Severe weather brings Eastern Cape lemon supply to a standstill"**



- **"It has been a season of low volumes and low margins"**



- **"We are running out of Valencias very quickly"**