

South Africa acts to ease late-season fears for European citrus producers

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 18 September 2026

The CGA and FPEF have confirmed the close of Valencia orange exports to Europe from South Africa's northern and eastern regions



Image: Adobe Stock

The South African citrus industry has decided on an early end to its export season to Europe.

At least, this is the case when it comes to fruit sourced mainly from the northern and eastern areas of South Africa.

This does not include fruit from the Western and Northern Cape, which has always been from insect-free regions.

The early end to the season for Valencia's from the northern and eastern regions has become a normal event in September.

However, this year it has special meaning, due to the disruptions of trade to the Middle East and the result of tariff increases, factors that now influence marketing decisions.

It has also become clear that European producers are getting worried about increases in exports of out-of-season citrus products.



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The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) and the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF) revealed that the last 2026 Valencia orange exports to Europe will be on Sunday (20 September), when the last fruit will be inspected.

The closure date gives those still supplying the EU sufficient notice to finalise their last orders and programme obligations.

It demonstrate the South African citrus industry's commitment towards being a responsible and reliable supplier of the finest quality fresh citrus fruits to trading partners across the globe, the CGA stated.

"The CGA and FPEF, the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum, wants to thank growers, exporters and other industry role-players for their continued dedication to an industry that supports more than 160,000 livelihoods on farms and in rural communities across South Africa," it said.

While exports to other parts of the world will continue, it is now clear that the industry will not hit last year's export volume level.

The latest estimate indicates that the country will ship some 198mn cartons, compared to the pre-season estimate of 209mn cartons.

Volume-wise the best performing categories were lemons, at 50.5mn cartons compared with the estimate of 45.9mn cartons, and Mandarins at 50.5mn cartons, only slightly under the initial estimate.