

### *3-4 million cartons destroyed by hail*

## **South Africa: Citrus season too early to call**

It is still a bit early to be predicting the effect of extreme heat and drought on the citrus volumes in South Africa but it thought that next year's fruit (2017) is more likely to feel the effects than this year.

However the pre-Christmas hail in Hoedspruit will reduce volumes of predominately grapefruit and Valencias by 3-4 million cartons.

Justin Chandwick, CEO of Citrus Growers Association said that the Eastern Cape was not seeing any problems for the citrus just now but the Western Cape is coming under a bit of pressure due to the heat and lack of water and the effects of this will be seen in next season's fruit set.

"There are mixed messages from the various regions as to how much water there is, all the citrus is under irrigation and it comes down to the allocation of that water, some areas are already down to 50% of the normal allocation," he explains. "The growers up in the north feel it is too early to call, there is also the forecast of heavy late summer rains. If you have late summer rains and still have the heat units you will still get some sizing up of the fruit. It is too early just now to start predicting what the volumes will be, we will know more in March just before the harvest starts."

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