

South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has determined the Tango seedless mandarin is a unique and protected variety, bringing a heated dispute over its uniqueness to an end.

Tango was developed by scientists from the University of California Riverside by irradiating budwood from Moroccan-bred Nadorcotts to create a seedless cultivar.

Since then, France-based Nador Cott Protection (NCP) has sought to discredit the validity of the Tango as a separate variety in a wide range of jurisdictions.

Eurosemillas, the Spanish seed company with licensing rights to the Tango mandarin in almost the whole world except the United States, recently received confirmation from DAFF that the variety would be protected.

The tests undertaken by South African scientists from 2012 to 2016 confirmed the essentially the same varietal description as the first summary published by the University of California Riverside and the subsequent description from the Valencian Institute of Agricultural Research (IVIA).

DAFF said the variety was a late seedless mandarin whose pollen was sterile for fruit from neighboring farms, including under conditions of cross-pollination.

"The recognition of registration of this variety from the authorities of the country has special relevant, not only because it has happened in what is the second-largest fresh citrus exporter in the world after Spain, but because it has happened after a new DUS analysis - the method used by the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) to technically prove a variety is 'different' (to all the rest), uniform and stable," Eurosemillas said in a release.

With the decision, Tango mandarins are now protected in the U.S., Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Israel, Ecuador, Spain and now South Africa.

In other citrus-growing countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, China, Brazil, Turkey and Paraguay, Eurosemillas said the process was now "very advanced".

"Also, this mandarin until recently had double protection from Spain and the [European] community, but the latter was cautiously suspended pending an appeal by Nadorcott Protection SARL, which holds the rights in the EU to the late Nadorcott in the name of *Les Domaines Agricoles* (the Royal family of Morocco)," Eurosemillas said.

"For all practical purposes the suspension doesn't have great implications because Spanish protection continues to be in force.

Eurosemillas added there was another legal success for Tango mandarins in Australia, where Variety Access Pty Ltd on behalf of Les Domaines Agricoles had brought forth a case against the cultivar's protection.

"As in the Spanish and South African cases, the Australian authorities just rejected the arguments to halt the registration process," the company said.

"In fact, none of the administrative or judicial actions presented by Nadorcott representatives to slow down or stop the trading of Tango have had success."

Related story: [Nadorcott case against Tango just a delay tactic, says Eurosemillas](#)

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