

A Fruit South Africa delegation was hard at work in the Philippine capital Manila last week campaigning for citrus market access, according to a newsletter from the Citrus Growers Association

of Southern Africa (CGA).

In the newsletter, CGA CEO Justin Chadwick said the group was led by South Africa's "hands on" Ambassador Martin Slabber and his Embassy staff to meet with Philippines Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

"BPI confirmed that they have all the necessary information to complete the pest risk assessment by the end of May," Chadwick said.

"It is hoped that the additional regulatory processes necessary to confirm access approval will be completed in time to allow some shipments to arrive in this market before the close of the 2016 season."

The Philippines imported 73,653 metric tons (MT) of citrus in 2015, of which more than half came from China at 39,846MT, followed by Argentina (9,330MT), the U.S. (7,036MT) and Australia (5,092MT).

"A visit to the Divisoria market revealed the hustle and bustle found in markets all over the world. Although apples and table grapes were present in large volumes, there was also a fair amount of lemons, oranges and soft citrus," Chadwick said.

Federcitrus president José Carbonell of Argentina told *www.freshfruitportal.com* the entry of South Africa would not pose competition for his country as the countries tended to ship different varieties.

"Argentina has a very good mandarin market in the Philippines...from what I've heard there won't be any inconvenience as they will be buying Afourer and clementine mandarins [from South Africa] and we send Satsuma and Okitsu," Carbonell said.

He added Argentina had also had a very good domestic market for oranges over the past three months, so there hadn't been as great a focus on orange exports recently.

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