

Cobus van Graan - FruitOne

South Africa: Grapefruit season is "slow going"

Grapefruit is in demand in many markets at the moment, due partly to an early stop on supply from Israel and Turkey, and partly to a slow start in the South African season.

Cobus van Graan from FruitOne said they are around halfway through the grapefruit harvest but it is slow going. "We have had to wait for the fruit to achieve good colour and are currently doing selective picking. The slow colour development means we have to pick each orchard 3 or 4 times which is very labour intensive."

But on the positive side it will allow FruitOne to maximise packable fruit and ensure consistent supply into the following 5-7 weeks. FruitOne does not expect severe peaks in its own supply and hope to deliver consistent quality for as long as possible.

"Due to the break in supply from Israel and Turkey and the delayed South African supply the market is currently absorbing and selling through all stocks. This is good for the South African growers and the industry," explains Cobus.

At the start of the season the expectation was that the grapefruit volume would be around 30% lower due to hail at the end of last year and extreme temperatures at the beginning of 2016, but for the actual figures we will have to wait till later in the season.

"Although volumes are lower than previous years, the conditions have meant that the fruit has a high brix and the internal quality and colouring are very good. The markets are enjoying good fruit which has not been stored," adds Cobus.

There are around 7 weeks of harvest still to go.

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