

South Africa cuts Valencia orange forecast by almost 10%

South Africa's leading citrus category in terms of volume is set for a significant reduction in size this year, prompted by hot and dry conditions over the Southern Hemisphere summer.

A month after reporting of an 'anything but normal' grapefruit crop in June, in last week's weekly newsletter Citrus Growers Association (CGA) of Southern Africa CEO Justin Chadwick said the Valencia orange season had been strange as well.

"As growers start to harvest their Valencias it has been apparent that the fruit just is not there – despite excellent packouts the crop load is small," Chadwick said.

"As a result the Valencia Focus Group have dropped their predicted volumes by a whopping 4.8 million cartons."

This takes the new estimate to 41.6 million 15kg cartons, which is almost 10% down on the initial estimate and 21% lower than the 2015 Valencia crop.

In contrast, he said the Soft Citrus Focus Group and the Navel Focus Group had both made slight upward changes to their predictions.

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