

Hannes De Waal - Sunday's River Citrus Company

"Not the most ideal year for lemon exports to Europe"

Sunday's River Valley is the main region producing lemons at the moment and Hannes De Waal MD at Sunday's River Citrus Company, one of the biggest citrus producers in the valley said, "Lemons are still being loaded for Europe, certainly from the Eastern Cape, although it is not the most ideal year for exports to Europe due to the small sizes and CBS restrictions but there are containers getting loaded."



"The CBS restrictions put an automatic curb on exports to Europe, so some importers are not getting as much as they want. We load in a very different way than we used to here in the Eastern Cape due to these restrictions."



"The situation is not bad for us though, prices are really high and we expect that to remain. It is our focus to try and stay in Europe but it is very difficult due to the back spot as we have to go through a lot of processes to ship there."

According to Hannes there are a lot of lemons going to the Russian market which is really also very good just now. "The South East Asian market is very flat though we are not sure why, but it could be down to consumers having less to spend on imported fruit due to the economy."

The Middle East is very stable and consumption has been good and SRCC are also sending some fruit to Japan, but according to Hannes that will never be a lot as it is a steri-protocol market and lemons don't do well in steady protocols. The company have a small retail program for Canada.

"Overall South African lemon exporters should have a good year. We do expect the season to end a lot quicker because we have had no breaks in harvesting due to rain, normally we would have had around 15 down days by now, but we have only had one, which is one up side to the drought conditions we are experiencing but make no mistake in this region it is still pretty severe, although other areas have had some some rain.



"We are packing out very quickly, Navels are flying out which is skewing the export figures making look like we have higher volumes. As for lemons we have just reduced the export figures this week by just under 1 million cartons, and it may come down more as we move to other areas of the valley, some growers are reporting less fruit and of course the sizes are smaller so the volumes may end up being similar to last year," said Hannes

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