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Grapefruit demands increase due to slow season

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Star Ruby grapefruit is exported by Fruitone.

Despite a fall in production volumes due to adverse weather conditions, an increase in global demand could push up prices for grapefruit producers in South Africa.

Cobus van Graan, chief operating officer of citrus producer FruitOne, told FTW Online that a slow start in the local season had created a longer supply gap following the end of the northern hemisphere harvest season in December last year – leading to stronger market demand.

“We are around halfway through the grapefruit harvest and 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 three or four times which is very labour intensive,” said van Graan

He added that this would however allow producers to maximise packable fruit and ensure consistent supply into the market over the next five to seven weeks when the local harvest season ended.

"Although volumes are lower than previous years, the conditions have meant that the fruit has a high carbohydrate level and the internal quality and colouring are very good, which could justify a price increase," commented van Graan.

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