

South Africa: Citrus exports forecast to rise across the board in 2017

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has forecast year-on-year export volumes to rise across all categories for the 2017 season, with the most significant increases for



Valencias, lemons and grapefruit.

In an estimate presented to the country's Citrus Marketing Forum last week and seen by *Fresh Fruit Portal*, the organization estimated a 19% increase in Valencia orange exports to 50 million cartons. This compares to 42 million in 2016 and 52.7 million in 2015.

Southern Africa's largest producing region for Valencias – Letsitele – is expected to see exports increase 18% to 11.8 million cartons, while the Hoedspruit region is forecast to see nearly a doubling of exports to 5.8 million cartons.

Navel oranges are forecast to see the most modest increase of the citrus category, with exports estimated to grow by 1% year-on-year to 26.3 million cartons. The increase is due to an increase in late Navels slightly more than offsetting decreases to early Navels and Cara Cara.

Southern Africa exported 24.4 million cartons of Navels in 2015, and 26 million cartons in 2014.

Senwes is forecast to overtake the Western Cape as Southern Africa's largest Navel-producing region. Senwes is expected to boost its exports by 21% to 7.3 million cartons, while the Western Cape is set for a 9% rise to 7.1 million cartons.

The CGA also estimates lemon exports to jump 16% to 17.5 million cartons. For the previous two seasons, total lemon exports were registered at 15.1 million cartons.

All growing regions are expecting an increase in lemon volumes, with the largest growing area – the S.R. Valley – set for a 16% increase to 8 million cartons. Senwes is forecast to see its exports grow 29% to 3.6 million cartons.

Meanwhile, Grapefruit exports are forecast to rise 14% year-on-year to 13.8 million cartons, putting it back at similar levels to the 2015 and 2014 seasons.

Letsitele is forecast to boost grapefruit exports 10% to 4 million cartons, while Hoedspruit is set for a 50% increase to 3.6 million cartons.

The 2017 industry estimate also pegged the soft citrus export forecast at 13.2 million cartons, representing an 8% year-on-year increase from around 12.2 million cartons last year.

All cartons are equivalent to 15 kilograms except for grapefruit cartons which are equivalent to 17 kilograms.

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