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SA citrus focus groups becoming more accurate – CGA

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Over the past nine years citrus focus group estimates in South Africa have been moving closer to the actual volumes exported, according to Citrus Growers' Association CEO, Justin Chadwick.

“Some may say that Variety Focus Groups are lucky – it is more likely that they are getting better with practice,” he said.

Chadwick noted that planners would be better able to use the annual estimate as a good indicator of what was to come.

“This is particularly important for macro planners in southern Africa – those looking at capacity, warehousing and transport requirements, amongst others,” he said.

Total estimates have been within 5% of final volumes no fewer than seven times over the mentioned period and in 2017 were almost spot-on.

The grapefruit and soft citrus focus groups were found to be within 1% of the final volume while lemon and Valencia exports were 7% more than the original estimate.

Only the navel focus group estimate was significantly inaccurate, with 20% less exported than anticipated. According to Chadwick this was due to the unexpected

impact of hot, dry summer conditions which resulted in fruit splitting and dropping.

The soft citrus variety experienced both the closest and the worst estimates with regard to regions, with Western Cape being just 0.2% above the estimate and Nelspruit 39% over the estimate.

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