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Diversification pays dividends for citrus producers

29 Aug 2017 - by Liesl Venter

Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick.

As citrus producers look to diversify their market focus, exporters have been investing in the Far East, according to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick.

He said the Chinese market had received less fruit in 2016, but early indications pointed towards growth in the current season. The same can be said of the South East Asia region. With the season only halfway through, there's been an increase in soft citrus and lemons to South East Asia.

Exports to the Russian Federation are also showing good volume growth this year.

"Increased market share has been experienced in Russia – lemons 6 to 11%; soft citrus 8 to 11%; grapefruit 7 to 9%, and in South East Asia – oranges 14 to 16%; lemons 14 to 15% and soft citrus 8 to 13%," said Chadwick.

The US market was of growing importance, he said. "We have access to the USA from the Western and Northern Cape. Growers in that region treat the US market with care as it is important to them. South Africa has applied for access from the rest of the country – a process that is taking an inordinate amount of time to conclude."