

Decision taken as total Valencia exports are just over halfway mark

South African Valencia suspension to maintain zero CBS interceptions

By the end of August there had been zero interceptions of citrus black spot on South African citrus reaching the EU, placing the industry in a favourable position in which it would like to end the season. Therefore it was decided, in conjunction with the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), to pro-actively close the export season on late Valencias on 22 September 2018.

"South Africa has decided to err on the conservative side," says Deon Joubert, Citrus Growers' Association EU envoy. "It's been a fantastic year, for both CBS and FCM interceptions, and it shows the degree to which the entire industry has worked together." By the end of August there had been four interceptions of FCM, a tremendous decrease from previous years when it hadn't yet been a quarantine pest in the EU.

In internal communication, the CGA wrote last week that the recommendation was for the Perishable Produce Export Control Board (PPECB) to suspend its final packhouse inspections for only late Valencia oranges from CBS areas (all citrus production areas with the exception of the Western Cape) destined for the EU on 22 September 2018. "This is seen as a proactive measure to contain the risk of increased late season CBS interceptions on late Valencias."

The reason to only suspend Valencias is based on reputable data that late Valencias are the only commodity which presents an increased risk of CBS interceptions late in the season, says Deon Joubert. Late mandarins and lemons do not present a similar risk and therefore their EU exports remain unaffected.

Valencia exports just over halfway mark

By the end of week 35, only 55% of this season's Valencias have been shipped (28.4 million of the estimated 51.2 million 15kg equivalent cartons), contrary to news reports last week that South Africa was taking this decision while their Valencia season was already in "the declining stage". Lemons and soft citrus are nearing the end of their export season, with respectively 86% and 90% of total volumes shipped by the end of week 35.

"The CGA will over the next three weeks leading up to the proposed market closure date diligently monitor the risk indicators for CBS and should they increase, the CGA will recommend that the cut-off market closure date be brought forward," the internal message continued.



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