

SA citrus exports close in on 2 million tonnes

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Yet another important milestone has been reached by the South African citrus industry. According to Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association, citrus production has reached a record volume packed for export in 2018.



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"This figure now exceeds 1,9 million tonnes, or 128 million 15kg cartons. The season started late and will finish late and is continuing. There are still approximately five million cartons to be packed, mostly oranges, and we expect the final number to be just shy of two million tons," said Chadwick. About 65% to 70% of South African citrus production is exported.

"Climatic conditions throughout the season were favourable in general, although it was not without its challenges. Our growers are, however, very resilient and can meet challenges." According to Chadwick the South African citrus industry is boosted by keen interest from Asian markets and especially China, took a lot of extra fruit. "The industry can meet the demand as new plantings of lemons and soft citrus are now starting to deliver."

Further growth is definitely expected, and Chadwick describes the growth he expects from the industry and citrus exports as huge. "I expect the number of cartons packed for export to increase to over 140 million in 2019 and as high as 170 million in the next five years."