

South Africa: Record season for citrus across the board

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A record Valencia orange crop has given southern African citrus exporters a 'full house' of records in terms of volumes packed and passed for export, the region's Citrus Growers Association (CGA) has said.

Valencias' final packed figure of 54 million cartons is marginally up on last year's 53.8 million (and just 1% up on the pre-season estimate).

The packed-for-export figures for the other citrus categories were as follows: 18.7 million for grapefruit (compared to 15.7 million last year), 16.1 million for soft citrus (13.4 million), 19.8 million for lemons (19 million) and 26.6 million for Navels (21.2 million).

In total, 135.2 million cartons of citrus fruit have been packed and passed for export. This exceeds the March estimate of 131.7 million and marks a notable increase from last year's 123 million cartons.

CGA CEO Justin Chadwick noted that the advantage of the wide geographic distribution of South African citrus was illustrated this year, with some Valencia-growing regions registering big declines in volumes packed against original estimate, and other regions making up for the decline by packing more than estimated – thereby meeting importers' requirements.

Of the bigger Valencia regions, the Eastern and Western Capes experienced the greatest declines as a result of the dry conditions, he said.

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