

South Africa: Jupiter Group upgrades practices, facilities for improved citrus harvest

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Jupiter Group is expecting a bright citrus season from its South African production site in Maswiri this year, as the company upgrades its practices and facilities.

It says an improved technical structure sees enriched agronomical inputs improve the color, size and quality of lemons, while the “aggressive” process of de-greening on Star Ruby Grapefruit has been minimized.

Three weeks into the citrus season, Jupiter South Africa is packing lemons for export and Navel oranges for the local market.

Its farm in Zonquasdrift, in the Western Cape, has started picking satsumas this week too.

It is the last month that these fruits will be packed into the company’s 40-year-old packhouse, affectionately referred to as the “old lady”.

In May, work will begin to upgrade the facilities. Jupiter aims to install a brand new Greefa electronic sizer and MED packing line components, which will be ready to pack the farm’s Valencia oranges as early as June.

Technical director Cristian Mertzger said: “By the end of the year, the entirety of the old pack house will be gone and we will be in a better position to meet the demand of our markets specifications.”

In addition, the group hopes to advance its operations’ efficiency with plans to purchase 10 new John Deere tractors and 10 new spray machines.

“It will be great for the team to welcome CEO Mark and his wife Yvonne, a director, to Maswiri to officially inaugurate the new packing line in June,” Mertzger said.

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