

# SA's citrus growers dispute 'Spanish fine' claims

By Annelie Coleman December 5, 2019 at 11:45 am



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There is no truth in media reports that the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (GSA) imposed fines on companies in South Africa that exported oranges and mandarins through Spanish ports.

This was according to Deon Joubert the association's special envoy for EU market access.

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He said the decision not to export via Spanish harbours was taken as early as 2015, after unfair and irregular inspection processes by officials in Spain were proven.

"South African citrus producers and the GCA board of directors took a unanimous decision at the time to stop all exports via Spain. Reports that companies were fined by the CGA are devoid of all truth," Joubert stressed.

The CGA nevertheless decided to test the Spanish port of Virgo this year. He added that the South African consignment was handled professionally and according to international inspection protocols for citrus.

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"As a matter of fact, we were so impressed that we have decided to use the Virgo port again in 2020," Joubert explained.



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According to the media reports, “the parties involved promised this would not happen again. They all agreed to pay a fine for their actions and to contribute funds to research”.

Joubert said such a claim was not even worth commenting on.

Justin Chadwick, the CEO of GSA dismissed the claims about the fines as “false news” and said the association had no power to enforce any kind of penalty.

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