

DOMESTIC

Overberg citrus finds solid sales overseas

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At a time when South Africa's citrus industry is in a spot of bother – to put it mildly – because of the labour go-slow at leading ports, a Western Cape area that's more known for its grapes is adding some sweet to the bitter, so to speak.

Managing director George Hall of Dibanisa in the Overberg region north of Swellendam - where soft citrus is grown in the harsh environment bordering on the Klein Karoo - has told a Dutch-based fresh produce portal that their fruit has been well received by consumers.

With Satsumas in March and Nadorcotts in September, Dibanisa is leveraging off a longer season with fruit that's also harvested earlier than usual.

"We farm our citrus a bit differently from the rest of the country, in a much more intensive way," Hall said.

Cresting a wave of unexpected success, Dibanisa has also invested in seedless lemons specifically intended for the German and Spanish markets, the latter being particularly worth mentioning as South African citrus exports have made significant inroads into a market renowned for its own fresh fruit quality.

Moreover, and as per specifications, the seedless lemons for Germany and Spain are packed on a chemical-free plant line.

With about 70% of their fruit going to the European and UK markets, Hall mentioned that the balance was exported to China, the Middle East, Russia and the US.

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