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Concerns raised over citrus labelling anomalies in India

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">Back in South Africa after a trip to the Fresh Produce India trade show last month, Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick has voiced concern over the labelling of fresh produce on the shelves of a high-end retailer he visited in Mumbai.

">In his weekly blog, Chadwick points out that labelling on the shelves of the retailer – which he equates to Woolworths in South Africa - is at odds with the fruit stickers.

“Grapefruit with Egypt stickers was labelled as “Product of the USA”, while Egyptian valencias were labelled as “Product of South Africa”. The manager explained that product changed from week to week and sometimes they were slow in changing the shelf labels,” says Chadwick. “But this seems a tall story given that South African valencias would have last been shipped to India in November 2018.”

The quality and prices of the produce were further cause for concern.

“This was a high end retailer – and yet the fresh produce was of a very poor quality. A lot of the produce would not be found in any store in South Africa.”

And yet despite this, the prices were exorbitant, says Chadwick. “Egyptian grapefruit (labelled US) was selling at US\$17.33 per kg (US\$ 300 per 15 kg carton) while Egyptian

valencia (labelled as South African) was selling for US\$2.9 per kg or US\$ 43.5 per 15 kg carton. “This at a time when the same carton was selling for under US\$8 in the market,” says Chadwick.

From this he makes two observations. “Demand is going to be poor at these sorts of prices, and there are huge margins being made between wholesale and retail.”

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