

Sales of South African citrus to the U.S. market have increased significantly this year amid the Covid-19 pandemic, with prices also rising in tandem, [Farmers Weekly](#) reports.

Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa, and Hannes Nel, managing director of the Sundays River Citrus Company, recently spoke during a webinar about this year's challenges and the market's response.

The sale of navel oranges in the US increased significantly this year, according to Chadwick.

"In March 2020, when the [COVID-19] situation was really bad in the US, sales increased 84% compared to the same time last year. Over the year, there has been a 29% increase in navel sales. It has been a massive positive for [South African citrus] in the US," Chadwick was quoted as saying.

He added that not only did volumes of South African citrus increase, but prices also increased over the season.

The same scenario played out for red grapefruit and lemons, with sales increasing 11% and 17% respectively, he said.

This increase in demand was most likely driven by the view that vitamin C was an immune booster - a perception that is prevalent in Western markets but not so much in Asia, where there has not been a market increase in demand.

This industry is hopeful that this trend would stick around for a while, with the pandemic not looking to end any time soon.

Nel said that while the pandemic was continuing, so would the demand for citrus.

"Overall, I do not think that the trend will go away easily," he was quoted as saying.

Summer Citrus from South Africa, the industry collaboration that consolidates the marketing, logistics, and sales efforts of the country's growers in the U.S. market, recently released a [production and marketing update](#) for the season.