

USDA

South African citrus export heads for record heights in 2020

South African citrus exports are expected to hit a record high in 2020. This forecast is based on the pace of exports up to August 2020, increased production, a peak in demand for healthy food and limited logistical disruptions from Covid-19. The United States is considered a premium market, and South African citrus exports to the US are expected to hit a record level of more than 70,000 tonnes in 2020, up 10% from the previous record of 63,544 tonnes in 2018. The citrus trade between South Africa and the US is encouraged by the African Growth Opportunity Act, which gives South African citrus tax-free access to the US markets.



Figure 1: South African Citrus Exports

Export growth is not surprising, given the strong growth of production in South Africa in recent years. The growth is mainly driven by the attractive investment returns and profit margins of citrus and the reaction of the citrus growers to a peak in global demand for especially easy peelers and lemons in particular.

South Africa usually exports its citrus from late March to August, and this period coincided with the Covid-19 lockdown between March and August 2020. However, all horticultural production, including citrus, was considered an essential service during the national lockdown and remained operational. Although there were initial difficulties in a number of ports in Cape Town and Durban, such as congestion, container shortages and port closures for limited periods due to Covid-19 infections, the citrus sector was able to bypass these hurdles.

The citrus industry established a Covid-19 Response Committee and the concerted efforts of the government, port authorities and shipping companies were critical to ensuring South Africa could reach peak export volumes.

[Click here for the whole article.](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=South%20African%20Citrus%20Exports%20Expected%20to%20Reach%20Record%20Levels%20Amid%20COVID-19%20Pretoria%20South%20Africa%20-%20Republic%20of%2010-08-2020) (<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=South%20African%20Citrus%20Exports%20Expected%20to%20Reach%20Record%20Levels%20Amid%20COVID-19%20Pretoria%20South%20Africa%20-%20Republic%20of%2010-08-2020>)

Publication date: Tue 13 Oct 2020

