The Port of Charleston in South Carolina is reportedly seeing a chance to pluck South African citrus imports following a USDA rule change.

The USDA announced earlier this month that any U.S. port with cold-storage sites could receive shipments of citrus from the exporting country. Previously this was limited to four ports - Newark, Philadelphia, Wilmington and Houston.

The ruling came after the USDA determined that South African citrus imports carry little risk of transporting the False Codling Moth.

South Carolina's State Ports Authority (SPA) says Charleston is in a perfect spot to attract the new business because it is one of a handful of U.S. ports with direct services to South Africa via the Maersk Line and the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

"[The port] has invested heavily in refrigerated and frozen cargo capacity and capabilities to handle more goods," SPA spokesperson Liz Crumley was quoted as saying by website Post And Courier.

"The advantageous location in the Southeast provides access to the region's rapidly growing population and retail grocery supply chain. The Southeast's population growth is driving increased consumption and the demand for more imported foods."

South Africa has shipped a record 77,000 metric tons (MT) of citrus to the U.S. so far this year, according to collaborative group Summer Citrus.

Lana Marks, the U.S. ambassador to South Africa, said: "The opening of these new ports of destination for citrus...will help facilitate trade between our two countries going forward, providing flexibility to U.S. retailers and wholesalers, lowering transportation costs and broadening the reach of South African citrus to other regions within the U.S. market."