

Citrus growers upbeat as China's logistics services get moving

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The Citrus Growers' Association is upbeat about the 2020 season, despite events beyond growers' control that could affect final export numbers, says CGA CEO Justin Chadwick.

"The Coronavirus (Covid 2019) outbreak presents a new challenge to fresh produce exporters across the globe – but it is encouraging that China's logistics services are expected to be fully operational soon, with cargo volumes and ship calls having swiftly rebounded over the past two weeks."

He says the outbreak across the European Union, the largest export market for South Africa's citrus, remains a concern and could still result in a decrease in demand and a shortfall of containers when the export season kicks off in May. "It is therefore critical that exporters confirm that there are containers available before they start shipping," he warns.

But those aren't the only challenges facing exporters, he adds. "Challenges at South Africa's ports, including aging and out of service infrastructure, as well as unresolved labour issues, remain a threat to export volumes. However, the Citrus Growers' Association is proactively engaging with Transnet and welcomes recent steps taken by the company to improve operations at a number of the ports. "This includes the

procurement of new equipment for both the Port Elizabeth and Durban ports, which is expected to arrive before the start of the export season.”

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