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SA citrus exports to the Philippines get the green light

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Years of negotiation have finally paid off for the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) – with access to the Philippine market for SA citrus now a done deal.

This follows the signing of a work plan by the Philippines Bureau of Plant and Industry (BPI) – the final step in the process.

“This has been a long journey, with many involved,” said CGA CEO Justin Chadwick.

And while several stakeholders had played a critical role, Chadwick said South African Ambassador in Manila, Martin Slabber, in particular had gone the extra mile.

“He opened his Embassy to the Fruit South Africa delegations who arrived on his doorstep every year, he attended trade shows, government meetings and seminars with the delegation, finding every way possible to advance the cause – along with his foot soldiers Tshire Kau and Ellen Vega.

“For a number of years Fruit South Africa exhibited at the Agri Link Trade Show – with excellent graphics prepared by the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF). Exhibiting at this event, and seminars presented by Anton Kruger (FPEF), showed BPI that South Africa was serious about the Philippines market.”

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Citrus Research International (CRI) and Fruit South Africa were among the organisations whose dogged efforts helped to make it happen.

The industry and DALRRD would now work on getting all the preconditions sorted out for a strong campaign in 2021, said Chadwick.

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