

Amendment to shipping protocol signed by both parties

Late season amendment allows greater access for South African lemons to China



While for some South African exporters it comes too late, there are a number who say they are definitely going to load lemons for China now that a long-awaited amendment to the shipping protocol has been bilaterally signed.

The demand for South African lemons in China is strong, the industry says.

The protocol revises the shipping temperature for disinfestation of lemons destined for China through increasing the shipping temperature.

The previous shipping protocol of -0.5°C caused cold damage to lemons and severely limited the amount sent to China from South Africa. The amendment now allows lemons to be shipped at $+3^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 18 days.

"This is very important for lemons as they are a fruit that is susceptible to cold damage at low shipping temperatures," the CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), Justin Chadwick, noted in his weekly newsletter. "The signing and publication of this revised protocol is very

important for the lemon sector of the South African citrus industry. Until now very few lemon consignments have been exported to China due to the disinfestation treatment requirements."

In June the CGA estimated that South Africa could be sending 25,000 tonnes of lemons to China by 2024, surpassing Argentina and Chile's lemon shipments to China.

"We hope to send a container or two this season and then we'll plan for substantial volumes for next season," says an exporter.

"It's late in the season, but we should be able to get some lemons to China," remarks another.

The first Chinese lemons are about to start as well as lemons from Turkey and Egypt, notes a third who has finished lemon exports for the season.

By the end of week 34, 26.6 million 15kg cartons of lemons had been shipped to all destinations. The latest crop estimate for lemons are 29.5 million cartons for this season.

Publication date: Tue 7 Sep 2021

Author: [Carolize Jansen](#)

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