

Record citrus harvest expected for 2020

By Siyanda Sishuba March 18, 2020 at 3:34 pm



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Southern Africa is expected to export a record 143,3 million cartons of citrus fruit to more than 100 countries in 2020.

This is a 13% increase over 2019, when 126,7 million cartons were exported, generating R20 billion and creating 120 000 jobs, according to a statement by the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA).

"This increase should translate into more job opportunities [and increased] foreign exchange revenue, and will contribute towards government's goal of increased agricultural exports over the next few years," the CGA said.

It added that the growth was largely a result of new orchards coming into production and good rainfall received across some production regions.

Quoting the latest report by the Citrus Focus Group, CGA information manager John Edmund said that the overall crop looked good and fruit sizes were marketable.

The Valencia export crop was estimated to be 50,36 million 15kg-equivalent cartons in 2020, or an 8% increase on last year, and 2% higher than the average for the past 10 years.

The navel orange export crop was estimated at 26,5 million 15kg-equivalent cartons, or 9% higher than last year.



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All the main lemon-producing regions were expected to show significant growth this year, with new orchards coming into production and an estimated growth of 19% to 26,4 million cartons.

Soft citrus was also expected to continue growing vigorously, with an estimated export crop of 23,2 million carton, 28% up on last year.

According to the statement, production areas in the northern parts of the country, including Burgersfort/Ohrigstad, Senwes and Hoedspruit would also experience significant growth in soft citrus output.

The Sunday's River Valley, which exported almost half of the region's lemons, was expected to export 12 million cartons this year, an 18% increase on 2019.

"The northern areas, such as Nelspruit, Letsitele and Burgersfort/Ohrigstad, will also show massive growth, ranging from 40% to 55% compared with last year."

"With the citrus industry expected to grow by a further 500 000t over the next three to five years, the CGA will continue to focus on opening and expanding market access in key markets, including China, the US, India, Philippines, Japan, Vietnam and the EU," the statement said.



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