

Rioters deal a blow to citrus exports

12 Jul 2021



South Africa's robust citrus industry, currently under pressure from declining export volumes, received yet another trade blow when a shipment of fruit became a casualty of the #FreeZuma rioters who ran rampant over KwaZulu-Natal on Friday.

According to Agri SA, this emerged after citrus worth R15 million, which was destined for the Port of Durban, was destroyed in the violence that brought traffic to a standstill as mobs set fire to objects on main highways such as the N3 and N2.

The loss of the shipment coincided with an announcement by Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), that the predicted export volume for 2021 was now almost seven million cartons lower than the March estimate.

Writing in his weekly newsletter for the CGA, Chadwick added that "both orange focus groups (navel and valencia) predicted 1.6 million cartons lower than the original estimate, while (the) lemon prediction is 2.3m cartons lower.

"Soft citrus (800 000 cartons) and grapefruit (600 000 cartons) are also slightly lower than estimated."

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