

RSA lobbying intensifies ahead of crucial EU vote

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 25 April 2022

A third statement by the South African citrus industry in three days warns on consequences of "yes" vote by the European Union

The Citrus Growers Association of South Africa (CGA) is ramping up pressure on the European Union ahead of this week's vote by member states on new regulations requiring South African orange imports to be subjected to cold treatment for False Codling Moth (FCM).

In its third statement in three days, CGA said the new rules were "mis-informed" and would have a "devastating" impact on orange exports to the EU.

Deon Joubert, special CGA Envoy: Market Access & EU Matters, claimed that if approved, the legislation could put 140,000 jobs at risk and lead to large gaps in the supply chain and higher prices for European consumers, at a time when the region faces the real risk of food insecurity due to the ongoing Ukraine-Russian conflict.

"The proposed legislation requires exporting African countries to implement a drastic mandatory cold treatment (0°C to -1°C for at least 16 days) for oranges headed to the region.

"This is despite South Africa enforcing a rigorous risk management system, which has been highly effective in protecting European production from the threat of pest or disease, including FCM, over the past few years," Joubert said.

The EU imports around 800,000 tonnes of citrus every year, however Joubert noted that interceptions for FCM had been consistently low over the past three years – totalling 19 in 2019, 14 in 2020 and 15 in 2021.

"This is in stark contrast to FCM interceptions from other third importing countries, which have been much higher –with 53, 129 and 58 interceptions over the same period. Yet no measures have been proposed against these countries, which makes the new regulations proposed against South Africa even more inexplicable," Joubert argued.

EUROFRUIT South Africa has disputed six of its reported EU interceptions in 2021, claiming, “the overwhelming expert scientific reviewed evidence indicates the larvae reported was dead, which means it posed no risk”.

CGA said the new rules are disproportionate and unfeasible because only a portion of the orange crop will be able to withstand the new prescribed cold treatment temperatures.

This would put a stop to all exports of organic and “chem-free” [non-treated] oranges to the EU including several popular varieties such as blood oranges, Turkey, Salustiana, Benny and Midknights.

Joubert also accused the EU of bypassing customary bilateral discussion to find practical solutions to mitigate the risk posed by FCM.

“The fact that this proposed legislation was put forward, despite alternative and equally effective cold treatment options being available and which have already been provided for in the South African FCM Risk Management System, indicates that this it is being driven by a political agenda,” Joubert said.

The CGA said the EU had received 164 submissions from South African growers and EU importers during the recent “Have your Say” public consultation process, of which 90 per cent were against the new rules.

“We hope sanity will prevail during SCOPAFF deliberations this week and these new regulations are rejected,” Joubert said.

