



Focus on the pre-Moon Festival market for Valencias

A lot of citrus still left to pack at halfway mark of South Africa's campaign

South Africa is halfway through its citrus season and packing is lagging behind previous years: 62 million 15kg cartons have been packed, compared with 67 million this time last year, and 70 million during 2020. Slow fruit ripening cost a few weeks.

South Africa is at this point expected to export 166.8 million cartons (it exported 161 million 15kg cartons last year).

This means that two-thirds of the citrus crop (mostly grapefruit, late mandarins and Valencias) are still on the trees and therefore, theoretically, approximately a hundred million cartons will need to be put through the system over the remaining 15 weeks of the citrus season.

In the case of the northern region, this translates to around 50 million cartons to be packed and shipped over the coming months and roughly the equivalent from the southern growing regions, and much of it going out from the Indian Ocean port of Durban.

Exports of class 2 navels have been cut back, and the navel export estimate has been adjusted from 28.7 million to 27.2 million cartons.

The same could happen to unpopular and large counts of late mandarin; the soft citrus export estimate stands at 34.1 million cartons currently.

The grapefruit estimate has been reduced from 16.8 to 15.7 million cartons and it's possible, says an exporter, that much of the grapefruit still hanging on the trees will have to be sent to juice because of constrained availability of vessel space.

Moon Festival is the focus for Valencias



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Valencia packers are now focusing on China to hit the pre-Moon Festival market, for which they have four weeks for fruit to arrive before 10 September, whereafter prices are lower.

This could place pressure on Durban's capacity as well as on the steri capacity of cold stores which are running at full capacity currently.

South African retailers confirm that the supply of citrus to the domestic market has strongly increased across all citrus categories, with very high quality citrus available. The wholesale market price is therefore currently very low: R1.71 (0.1 euro) for class 1 orange.

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Author: Carolize Jansen

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