

Promising prospects for citrus exports from Zimbabwe

By Annelie Coleman | 27 June 2022 | 3:26 pm

The outlook for citrus exports from Zimbabwe is very favourable, especially in light of the considerable increase in that country's export volumes to the EU.



Once one of Africa's largest citrus export countries, Zimbabwe is experiencing a resurgence in demand for this fruit.

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Citrus exports to the EU grew 30% between September 2021 and March 2022, compared with the same period in 2020/21, amounting to about 1,7 million tons of fruit, according to a recent report in *The Zimbabwe Mail*.

According to the report, citrus production in the Mazowe Valley could be traced back to around 1914 with the establishment of the first commercial citrus estate in Zimbabwe. In later years (1970 to 1980) commercial production began in the Chegutu area. Nowadays, citrus was also produced in the Beit Bridge, Chegutu and Mvurwi areas.

In addition, new orchards were also being established in Mashonaland and the Midlands provinces, bringing the total area planted to citrus in that country to 3 000ha.

According to [zwnews.com](https://www.zwnews.com), Zimbabwe's Horticultural Development Council recently called on producers to increase citrus plantings to enable them to meet the expected demand from China.

Zimbabwe and China signed a protocol last year that paved the way for citrus exports to China in the near future. Zimbabwe was only the fifth African economy to receive approval for fresh fruit exports to China.

It was expected that the Chinese market could create demand for oranges, mandarins, lemons, limes and grapefruit.

Once one of Africa's largest citrus producers, Zimbabwe was trying to regain the markets it lost after its controversial land reform programme during the 1980s, *The Zimbabwe Mail* said.

In addition to the increase in exports to the EU and the protocol signed with China, Zimbabwe was also pursuing new export avenues such as markets in Asia and the Middle East.

Zimbabwe exported horticulture products to the value of R1,01 billion in 2021, according to the Zimbabwean Trade Information Portal, ZimTrade.

Annelie Coleman

Annelie Coleman represents Farmer's Weekly in the Free State, North West and Northern Cape. Agriculture is in her blood. She grew up on a maize farm in the Wesselsbron district where her brother is still continuing with the family business. Annelie is passionate about the area she works in and calls it 'God's own country'. She's particularly interested in beef cattle farming, especially with the indigenous African breeds. She's an avid reader and owns a comprehensive collection of Africana covering hunting in colonial Africa, missionary history of same period, as well as Rhodesian literature.

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