CGA releases data regarding containers affected by EU rules

The Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) released data regarding the amount of containers affected by the implementation of the new EU FCM regulations in its "From the Desk of the CEO" newsletter published on August 12.

Justin Chadwick, CEO of the CGA said: "Our initial estimates indicated that 1350 containers (floating consignments) would be affected by the implementation of the new EU FCM regulations."

The CGA has been engaging with DALRRD on a daily basis to ensure that the currently detained containers at EU ports are released on an urgent basis. The department has committed to issuing new phytosanitary certificates, which should result in the majority of these containers being released in the next few days.

Chadwick continued: "Our latest reports would indicate that of this amount (1350 containers), 820 containers will be issued new phytos. DALRRD, through their spokesperson Reggie Ngcobo, estimates that of these, only 300 containers have received their replacement phytos."

Although he suggested that the issuing of the phytosanitary certificates may provide relief over the short-term to local growers, he also pointed out how the "ongoing threat to the citrus industry", in the form of new EU regulations, remains.

He described: "the long-term implementation of the unjustified, impractical and discriminatory EU FCM regulation on South African oranges, [...] are going to be impossible to implement by the local industry going forward."

To date, local citrus growers have counted losses of R200 million (over $12 million), with the CGA warning that growers will more than likely also receive half their expected returns on any fruit that is released, due to the fact that most containers have been standing for a few weeks, and have therefore missed their programs because of late arrival.

Despite challenges with the new EU regulations, the newsletter outlined that a total of 98.8 million citrus cartons have been shipped to date, which is approximately a 14 percent increase compared to the same period last year, which stood at a total of 86.6 million citrus cartons.