

Millions of cartons of South African citrus en route to EU could face destruction due to new law

South Africa's Citrus Growers Association (CGA) reportedly says that the recently introduced EU cold treatment regulations for oranges could see 3.2 million cartons of citrus currently headed to the region being destroyed by authorities.



The fruit is said to be worth more than 600 million rand (US\$35 million), local publication [Money Web](#) reports.

The South African citrus industry had severely opposed the new rules, saying that they are ["disproportionate and unfeasible"](#) and could lead to large gaps in the supply chain and higher prices for EU consumers.

Deon Joubert, CGA special envoy for market access and EU matters, says the regulations were published in the Official Journal of the EU on June 21, and despite several objections will be effective from July 14.

"The fact that authorities are trying to enforce these new regulations a mere 23 days after publication, making it impossible for South African growers to comply, highlights how unjustified and discriminatory this legislation is, with European consumers and local rural workers ultimately paying the price," says Joubert.

In a statement issued on Monday, CGA said the EU Standing Committee on Plant, Animal, Food and Feed published the new regulations in a bid to address interceptions of false codling moth (FCM) – a native citrus pest in South Africa – from southern African orange exports.

According to Joubert, the regulations require imports of citrus fruit to undergo specified mandatory cold treatment processes and precooling steps for specific periods, including up to 25 days of cold treatment, before shipping and subsequent importation.

"Most critically, local citrus growers currently export 800 000 tonnes of high-quality citrus fruit to the EU annually, yet FCM interceptions have been consistently low over the past three years," he says, adding that there were 19 interceptions in 2019, 14 in 2020 and 15 in 2021.

He adds that the nature of the cold treatment prescribed in the new regulations contradicts scientific evidence, making it an unnecessary trade-restrictive measure that contravenes international requirements for such phytosanitary trade regulations.

Additionally, a large portion of South Africa's commercial orange production will also not be able to withstand the new prescribed cold treatment, which could cause severe damage.

The CGA has previously said that it would [appeal the EU's decision](#) to implement the new rules.

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