

Southern African citrus volumes set to boom

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 26 January 2023

The business faces comprehensive planning over next two months as it sets its sights on the next ten years

As if the past season has not been tough enough, Southern Africa's citrus growers face the mother of all consultations over the next two months.

The challenge is to set a plan in place that will help it with the huge increase in production expected over the next ten years.

Growers in South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Eswatini are all in the mix and the growers will face a whole host of crucial challenges on the way.

Over the last few years, the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) has mainly spoken about it reaching a figure of 200m cartons by 2025. This would have meant that over the next few years the industry would have had to export an additional 40m cartons.

Now, however, it has become clear that a much bigger task is at hand – exporting 260m cartons by 2032. Plans to do so will be hatched over the next two months with the new 260 Vision being agreed by mid-March when the industry meets for its annual congress.

CGA chief executive Justin Chadwick said that, looking back at his previous years' predictions at Christmas, he realised that they were mainly incorrect. "So predicting the future will not be attempted this time."

The new year brought with it a lot of contemplation for the future, he said, with resolutions to improve and plans for 2023.

"As a citrus industry we are in a way fortunate that the harvesting and marketing season allows for a few months of retrospection before the summer break, and a few months of planning before the new season starts."

While 2023 and the challenges and lessons learned during 2022 would surely dominate, Chadwick said, finding answers for challenges over the next ten years is going to be the biggest

EUROFRUIT Southern African industry.

Exporting 260m cartons by 2032 would mean an increase of at least 10m cartons each year from now to 2032.

The 260m carton-mark in 2032 is not merely a pipedream. The trees have been planted and the crop will emerge from the orchards in ten years.

Chadwick explained that the CGA had been tasked with formulating a plan towards the CGA Boards Vision 260. "This is a plan that will enable Southern African citrus growers to produce, pack, distribute and market 260 million cartons of citrus fruit by 2032.

"During the first few months of 2023 the CGA will be meeting with stakeholders throughout the value chain to present the predictions of the long term model, to explain the nine projects that will drive capacity development, skills development and action plans to enable vision 260. All stakeholders have a role to play, with planning being essential," he said.

The citrus industry will meet for its annual congress in Port Elizabeth on 14 March and it is expected that the first crop estimate for 2023 will be revealed shortly after.

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