



This year's citrus game plan is maximising value, not volume

Southern Africa's citrus volumes continue their upward trajectory – an estimate of over 166 million 15kg cartons at this point, from 127.2 million cartons in 2019.

Citrus farmers are under pressure to be sustainable and a major focus this season will be on making sure the right product goes to the right market, to get back prices that can compensate for significantly higher input costs.

“It will be very much a choice about what goes to market on sizing, count, colour, quality, in order to maximise value,” says an industry expert.



Close to half of South Africa's citrus is grown in the northern provinces of the country. There will be a reduction in the amount of navels as a result of hail and high heat in the Senwes (Groblersdal/Marble Hall) areas, but there is growth expected in the Valencia category. Last year the region produced just under 37 million cartons of Valencias.

The soft citrus export estimates have not yet been finalized, but a big jump in soft citrus from the Senwes area is probably, growing from 4.5 million cartons in 2019 to 11.7 million 15kg cartons in 2022, and possibly increasing by as much as 5 million cartons again this year.

In the Western Cape soft citrus, particularly late mandarins in the Boland, will also increase by roughly 1.5 million cartons over its almost 12 million cartons of soft citrus last year.

Eastern Cape had a substantial increase in production last year to 48.6 million 15kg cartons which should be more or less similar this year, but the Gamtoos Valley's water pressures continue.

Durban cold stores will be under pressure to conform to EU requirements

It is widely acknowledged that the impact of the EU's cold protocol for oranges won't be easy to manage from a landside or cold store perspective, particularly in Durban where cold stores are going to have to force cool oranges down to 2°C as soon as possible to avoid massive bottlenecks in the system.

About 5,000 containers are estimated to be shipped out from Maputo (not according to cold steri protocols, though) which will hopefully lessen pressure on Durban.

There is more cold store capacity available to the ports of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth/Ngqura in the Eastern Cape relative to the substantially lower volumes of citrus that they handle, compared to Durban.

Publication date: Fri 21 Apr 2023

Author: [Carolize Jansen](#)

© [FreshPlaza.com](#)



