



Nico Kotze – Capespan

Big swing in citrus exports to East expected over coming month

In Citrusdal and Clanwilliam, the areas most affected by recent Western Cape floods, some citrus orchards are still unpassable but most farms have been able to resume packing this week, says Nico Kotze, Head: Citrus at Capespan. Growers are working hard to get fruit off the trees and make up for lost time.

“Some mandarin and navel volumes have definitely been impacted, especially in orchards on the banks of the Olifants River. But to be able to already state exactly how much will be lost, is very difficult,” he says.

“Overall, it appears the season is early, especially on mandarins – but in the same breath, it’s very difficult to compare this season with the previous three seasons which were all characterized by completely unexpected, external factors,” he says.

“A combination of larger fruit, lower yields on seedless oranges and late rains during the season means we’re probably not going to see the record crop that was predicted.”



Tempered outlook on Europe's orange shortage

"Currently fewer oranges are going to the Far East because of the pull in Europe but bear in mind that the varieties now harvested, are not really Far East varieties. Therefore, we expect that within the next two to four weeks, volumes will swing to the East," he says.

He remarks that Durban has been operating well thus far, but they're carefully monitoring the situation, as volumes will increase in the next couple of weeks.

European retail has been switching to South African oranges after a very difficult end to the Northern Hemisphere Citrus season.

"In Europe there is a very good market opportunity, now we just need the volumes."

Producers are struggling with high incidences of citrus black spot and phytosanitary requirements, which are holding back orange volumes, but all the same, Nico feels, Europe's orange shortage might not be as acute as has been proffered.

India has a taste for SA citrus

He observes that the growth in citrus trade to countries like Malaysia, Singapore and India has been buoyed by late mandarins in particular.



Despite high tariffs on South African citrus, India has excellent growth potential for South African citrus exporters.

The country seems to have developed a taste for South African citrus, he remarks, and with the recent easing of shipping protocols the turnaround time to Indian trade is significantly sped up.



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