



Tight supplies of lemons & oranges expected as South Africa exits early



Citrus exports from South Africa will end significantly earlier this year, with as much as four to five weeks in certain areas, as the size of the export crop became clearer over months.

The Valencia export estimate has been reduced by another million cartons to 48.4 million 15 kg cartons, which is 6 million cartons below the initial estimate.

The count distribution of the crop on the trees was different from what was initially anticipated, says an exporter, and the overall crop was lighter.

"Lower tonnes per hectare are coming off the trees (a light harvest) and fruit is large. This applied to much of the country with the exception of some areas, but definitely to the Eastern Cape which was very short on volumes."

During the change-over from Southern to Northern Hemisphere citrus a shortage could develop on lemons and oranges. However, next year will probably look different next year given the good rain of this season.

The reduction in crop is perhaps just as well, given the slowdown in consumption from consumers. Prices in Europe are holding up, largely as a result of lower South American citrus exports due to high inflation and shipping costs

The Eastern Cape citrus export season will end a month earlier; in the Western Cape where abundant winter rain caused acids to drop quickly as well.

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