

Zim clinches sweet citrus fruits export deal to China

By Annelie Coleman | 17 October 2023 | 3:00 pm

Zimbabwe's first citrus exports to China commenced after Zimbabwean citrus orchards and packing houses were given the green light for the exports in June this year.



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According to Zimbabwe's Plant Quarantine Services Institute (PQSI), the exports began with 12 containers having already reached the Chinese market and 34 more containers still in transit at the time of going to print.

The list includes 11 orchards and six packing facilities, as approved by China in June. The initial batches were composed entirely of oranges.

According to a report by the publication Produce Report, the first consignment was handled through the port of Durban in South Africa, with future plans, however, to shift to the port of Beira in Mozambique, which offers a shorter route and faster transit time.

At present, Beira lacks cold storage facilities that meet the requirements of the

"The pilot phase of the citrus exports to China began in August with containers of oranges from the Beit-bridge area being shipped via the Port of Durban. To date we have issued phytosanitary certificates to export 46 containers of oranges to China with each container averaging 24 ton," said PQSI head, Nhamo Mudada.

According to the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, the country's export volume rose by 46% since 2017, hitting 70 000-metric tons last year.

According to Paul Bristow, Zimbabwe director of the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe mainly exported citrus to Europe and the Middle East in the past.

“Although China is a promising new development one of our drawbacks is that we are situated far from ports. However, the new market in China could add much-needed impetus to the local citrus production industry. Our industry is small, but was increasing markedly with significant plantings in the northern parts of the country,” he told Farmer’s Weekly

Zimbabwean fresh citrus fruits permitted for export to China include sweet oranges (*Citrus sinensis*), mandarins (*Citrus reticulata*), grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*), lemons (*Citrus limon*), limes (*Citrus aurantifolia*) and bitter oranges (*Citrus aurantium*).

Annelie Coleman

Annelie Coleman represents Farmer’s Weekly in the Free State, North West and Northern Cape. Agriculture is in her blood. She grew up on a maize farm in the Wesselsbron district where her brother is still continuing with the family business. Annelie is passionate about the area she works in and calls it ‘God’s own country’. She’s particularly interested in beef cattle farming, especially with the indigenous African breeds. She’s an avid reader and owns a comprehensive collection of Africana covering hunting in colonial Africa, missionary history of same period, as well as Rhodesian literature.

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