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South Africa flexes fruit muscle in Netherlands

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Source: Urdu Palace

The first navels from Marble Hall in South Africa's Limpopo province have arrived in the Netherlands for the Dutch company OV Fruit, with more exports to follow, according to the company's commercial manager, Victor van Turenhout.

OV Fruit markets South African citrus under the Gogo brand.

"The planning is already done, and beyond that, there's really not that much to do.

"Although some more supply is expected now, it's not in great volumes, while demand is very strong," Van Turenhout said.

"Prices are good at up to €1.50 per kilo. That's certainly better than last year. It should, of course, be noted that everyone in the chain is facing higher costs, including the growers.

"So a specific price level is sorely needed."

OV Fruit works with an exporter in Johannesburg who organises cold treatment for exports to the Netherlands.

It's one of the few exporters that can do that itself, *Fresh Plaza* reported.

"Entry controls are strict, but I haven't heard of any interceptions in Europe," Van Turenhout said.

He said it's the highest volumes they have received from South Africa under current market conditions.

"There are still some retail programmes with Egypt, but that country is gradually nearing the end of its season, and you notice that in the quality."

Van Turenhout added that the orange market will stay robust as Argentina and Uruguay have less fruit available, and South Africa is shipping more and more citrus to North America, the Middle East and China.

China, in particular, wants top quality.

"Nevertheless, we're still competing and have the advantage that we can supply nice varieties throughout the season under the same strong brand. We do that in 15 kg telescopic boxes and 15 or 16 kg open tops. For retail, we have new 7 kg packaging," he says.

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