

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Lemon export estimates for '24 season adjusted downwards

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Source: Fresh Fruit Portal

As South Africa's lemon export season draws to a close, the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) has adjusted projections for 2024 downwards.

This has emerged from a review of estimates conducted by the CGA's Lemon Focus Group.

At the end of July, the CGA also adjusted orange export estimates down, for both navels and Valencias.

CGA chief executive Justin Chadwick said: "Although the lemon season is drawing to a close, and some areas have finished packing, feedback from the remaining harvesting areas has necessitated a further downward adjustment of the overall export estimate.

"At the start of the lemon season, the export of 37.9 million 15-kilogram cartons of lemons was projected. This has been reduced during meetings held throughout the season."

Chadwick said the latest adjustment brought the total estimate for 2024 exports of lemons to 33.9m cartons.

“Last year, southern Africa exported 35.6m cartons. Adjustments this week by the Sundays River Valley (down almost one million cartons), and the Western Cape (Citrusdal down 100 000 cartons), were the most significant.”

He said the biggest contributors to decreased production were weather events – strong winds in the Sundays River Valley and flooding in Citrusdal.

“The overall lemon estimate follows a pattern that has become clear as the citrus season has progressed: due to drier weather causing fruit sizes to be somewhat smaller, good local juicing prices, as well as recent severe weather events, fewer cartons of citrus will be exported than expected.”

Leroux Venter, who chairs the Lemon Focus Group, said: "There is a clear swing in the figures.

“It has been a very unusual season.”

He said initial projections had shown that a robust lemon export season could have led to an oversupply of fruit in the market.

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