

SA citrus to make its way to Vietnam markets

By Jyothi Laldas | 28 March 2024 | 1:00 pm

As the South African citrus export season kicks into high gear in the coming weeks, a significant bilateral protocol has been established with the Vietnamese government, paving the way for local oranges to enter the markets of Vietnam.



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Recently announced by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in collaboration with the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA), this development promises a boost to the export potential of South African oranges by an estimated 15 000t.

Justin Chadwick, CEO of the SA Citrus Growers' Association, emphasised that this expanded market access would not only contribute to increased revenue but also create job opportunities within the industry.

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The historic protocol follows nearly a decade of negotiations prompted by changes in Vietnamese import regulations.

During this time, DALRRD and the CGA worked closely to ensure that South African citrus growers would benefit from enhanced market access.

Technical support provided by Citrus Research International, a subsidiary of the CGA, further bolstered these collaborative efforts.



Agriculture Minister Thoko Didiza reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting farmers and promoting export-led growth during her address at the CGA's Citrus Summit in 2023.

In a joint statement, DALRRD and the CGA said this commitment materialised with the agreement on phytosanitary requirements between Vietnam and South Africa, including the removal of two pests from the official pest list.

The finalisation of a new cold treatment protocol by the Plant Protection Department of Vietnam further facilitated the entry of South African oranges into the Vietnamese market.

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"The significance of this milestone is highlighted by the potential for the South African citrus industry to substantially increase its exports in the coming years.

"With collective action aligned with the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP), exports could surge from 165 million to 260 million cartons within the next eight years," DALRRD said.

In expressing gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam, both DALRRD and the CGA emphasised that the opening of the Vietnamese market was mutually beneficial for Vietnamese consumers and South African citrus growers alike.

Jyothi Laldas

