

<https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/association-expects-higher-export-volumes-across-all-citrus-fruits-2024-04-02>

Association expects higher export volumes across all citrus fruits

2ND APRIL 2024 BY: MARLENY ARNOLDI - DEPUTY EDITOR ONLINE



As the citrus export season starts this month, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) is

confident that 37.9-million 15 kg cartons of lemons will be exported to key markets, which is an increase of 7% year-on-year.

Lemon exports have more than doubled since 2016.

The increase in lemon and other citrus exports is testament to the resilience of South African citrus growers, producing more citrus under challenging circumstances including high inputs

costs, loadshedding and deteriorating public infrastructure, the CGA states.

The association also expects higher export volumes for oranges, particularly a 4% year-on-year increase in Navel orange exports to 25.6-million 15 kg cartons.

After two years of suppressed exports of Valencia oranges, volumes are likely to improve this year and resume their long-term trajectory.

The CGA expects a 12% increase year-on-year in Valencia export volumes to 58-million 15 kg cartons. However, this forecast does not account for a prediction made by Orange Focus Group that, owing to substantially higher returns expected for fruit being supplied to local processors, orange exports could be reduced by up to 5%.

Grapefruit exports are also likely to grow by 14% year-on-year to 16.7-million 15 kg cartons, particularly to China.

Further, Satsuma, Clemetines and Novas are expected to increase by 16%, 8% and 8%, respectively, to about 1.7-million, 5.4-million and 4.5-million cartons, respectively.

The CGA is not yet able to tell what the late mandarin crop will be at this stage, with a full estimate expected later in the season.

The association says a new bilateral protocol between South Africa and Vietnam has been established, which opens the Vietnamese market to South African oranges. The CGA estimates this market to be sized at 15 000 t.

Overall, the quality of fruit for export this season looks to be excellent, despite possible smaller sizes of fruit coming from the

Northern growing regions of the country owing to dry conditions, the association points out.

In the 2023 export season, citrus growers packed 165.1-million 15 kg cartons for delivery to global markets, which marked an increase of 800 000 cartons compared with 2022.

The CGA is positive that by working together, industry role-players can realise the targeted export of 200-million cartons a year in the next four years, and possibly 260-million cartons a year by 2032.

The association warns, however, that freight logistics group Transnet will have to ensure there are no delays in expanding private sector involvement in port logistics, as current port congestion can imperil the citrus export economy.

The CGA also warns that, while export volumes are likely to increase, it does not automatically mean an increase in profitability or the viability of many citrus farms, given the steep prices of input costs across the value chain and other severe challenges that remain.

The association adds that the European Union's discriminatory and unscientific phytosanitary regulations on citrus black spot (CBS) and false codling moth (FCM) remain a threat to South African producers accessing this market.

To this end, the CGA continues calling on government to help establish an independent World Trade Organisation (WTO) panel that can adjudicate on the FCM matter, as well as a consultation process with the WTO on CBS. 🇿🇦

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