

# CGC denounces South Africa's WTO action

By [Maura Maxwell](#) | 18 April 2024

## Committee accuses South Africa of "threats and blackmail" towards the EU

Spain's Citrus Management Committee (CGC) has denounced South Africa's WTO challenge to the European Union over citrus imports as a "hypothetical dispute".

On Tuesday, the South African government lodged a dispute at the WTO over the EU's phytosanitary aimed at preventing citrus black spot (CBS) from entering the bloc, claiming the rules are "not justified, proportionate or appropriate" and pose a significant financial burden on the South African citrus industry.

CGC president Inmaculada Sanfeliu commented: "The problem is not the regulations, it is their repeated non-compliance".

The CGC said South Africa had put forward few technical reasons to justify its accusation that the EU's actions amount to protectionism, and that its government had only decided to act now because the start of the Southern Hemisphere import campaign is fast approaching.

"The scientific community describes [CBS] as the most dangerous and harmful fungus in citrus, since it causes necrotic lesions that make it unfeasible to market [the fruit] fresh," CGC said, adding that its arrival in Spain would be a "disaster" for the Spanish sector.

The Committee said South Africa's assertion that CBS cannot be transmitted through fruit is "either a half-truth or an outright falsehood". It cited the European Food Safety Agency's Plant Health Panel, which states that fruit is still a "possible and moderately probable" route for importing the fungal disease.

*Fruitnet* understands that the EU now has one month to respond to a request for consultation. If the process runs smoothly, it is expected that the dispute will be heard in the second half of the year, after South Africa's 2024 campaign.