

R1,2m support for Eastern Cape's black citrus growers

By Annelie Coleman | 13 May 2024 | 5:30 am

The R1,2 million support to black citrus growers in the Eastern Cape recently announced by the Citrus Growers Association's Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) and the Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) is set to play a decisive role in helping them increase their access to global and local markets.



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This was according to Lukhanyo Nkombisa, general manager of CGA-GDC. He said the agreement was part of the company's goal of driving the development of the citrus industry while contributing to its transformation agenda.

He told *Farmer's Weekly* the new R1,2 million agreement would support the commercialisation prospects of black citrus producers and enable their entry into export markets.

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"In order to export and trade locally, the producers must be accredited and be compliant to, among others, [Global Gap Certification](#) (GlobalGAP). To attain the official accreditation and compliance is a costly affair, and through the agreement we aim to assist the farmers to attain those requirements," Nkombisa added.

GlobalGAP pertains to compliance with rules and regulations about the safe use of chemicals during production and farming practices on farms. Producers are also required to adhere to the [Sustainability Initiative of South Africa's](#) (SIZA) certification requirements, which call for good



relationships with farmworkers, adherence to labour laws of the country as well as promoting good living conditions on farms.

The initial objective is to support 10 of 37 identified black citrus producers in the Eastern Cape. The 37 black farmers are from the citrus-growing regions of Patensie and Sundays River Valley in the Sarah Baartman District Municipality, and from the Kat River Valley in the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality.

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According to 2023 statistics, the Eastern Cape citrus industry was the second largest in South Africa after Limpopo, contributing 25% to the Eastern Cape GDP with 24 508ha under production. South African citrus is exported, among others, to Europe, Africa, the UK, Russia and the Middle East.

Akho Skenjana, the ECDC's senior manager for manufacturing and agro-processing, told fruitnet.com: "Citrus varieties produced in the Eastern Cape area include lemons, soft citrus, oranges and grapefruit. The agreement also includes a feasibility study to investigate the establishment of post-harvest facilities such as a packhouse and a juicing plant."

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