

exporters send fruit to Russia than in the past"

South Africa's citrus exports to Russia have returned to normal volumes over the past two seasons, with consumers in the market said to change their habits by demanding higher class fruit. "The traditional perception is of Russia as a market that has gladly received Class 2 fruit. Over the past few years this perception has changed, it is now very difficult to trade Class 2 fruit there," says Jan Carel Kritzing, marketing manager of the export company Zest Fruit, who has Russia as one of their main export markets.

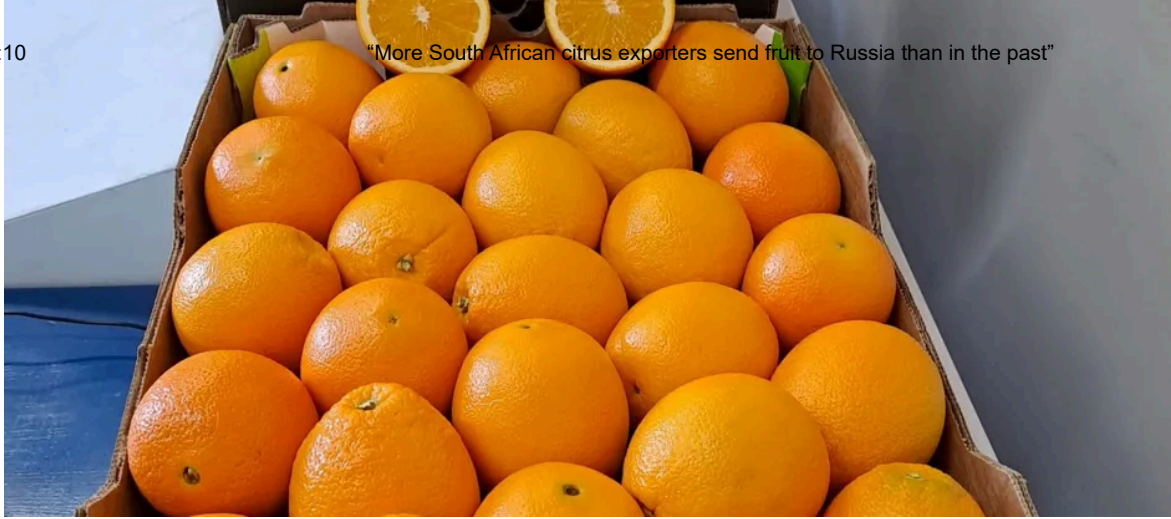


He says the Russian consumer perception and demand for better quality fruit has completely changed. "The cost that their consumer now pays is more, due to the supply chain that is driving prices higher, they now wish to have decent fruit quality. The traditional sizes of fruit will remain the same for this market."



Looking at South Africa's export figures to Russia up to week 23, compared to the same time that the war in Ukraine started in 2022, the exports to Russia are 60% more year to date. "Star Ruby grapefruit is more than 2022, but 20% less than last year. Consumption is the big driver. Lemons are the same as the previous season, those volumes are closer to a traditional year. Oranges are behind in the industry, mainly due to high local juice prices. Soft citrus volumes are the same as last year, which is more than the previous season. To date, Russia exports were normal."

Besides Russia as their key market, the spread of markets differs from company to company. "Russia remain a key market for South African producers," states Kritzinger.



Kritzinger says if anything he notes even more suppliers of citrus from South Africa to Russia. "Compared to 2022 there are more players from South Africa to Russia - referring to Russian retailers especially. The move is to supply directly to retail, which makes the collecting of money easier. Retail works strictly on a contractual basis, while in wholesale there's more trading, and it comes with higher risk."



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