

South African lemon exports fall further

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 1 August 2024

New forecast sees volumes drop well below last year's figures and initial 2024 predictions

The South African lemon export season is nearing its end, a campaign that has seen volume estimations drop regularly to the point where they are now well below the original forecast and the final export figure from 2023.

Citrus Growers Association CEO Justin Chadwick said the organisation's Lemon Focus Group had met and decided to make a further adjustment to the export forecast.

"Although the lemon season is drawing to a close, and some areas have finished packing, feedback from the remaining harvesting areas has necessitated a further downward adjustment of the overall export estimate," he explained.

At the start of the season an export total of 37.9m 15kg cartons was projected, he continued, and this had been reduced during meetings held throughout the season.

"This week's adjustment brings the total estimate for 2024 exports of lemons to 33.9m cartons. Last year, Southern Africa exported 35.6m cartons."

Chadwick said adjustments to the Sundays River Valley forecast, which has fallen almost 1m cartons, and that in the Western Cape, where Citrusdal has dropped by another 100,000 cartons, were the most significant.

"Strong winds in the Sundays River Valley and flooding in Citrusdal have had an impact on these figures," he confirmed.

The overall lemon estimate followed a pattern that became clear as the citrus season progressed, with drier weather causing fruit sizes to be somewhat smaller.

Good local juicing prices, as well as recent severe weather events, means less citrus will be exported than initially expected.

EUROFRUIT man of the Lemon Focus Group, said there had been a clear swing in the figures.

“It has been a very unusual season,” Venter noted. “While there was an initial concern that there might be an oversupply of lemons, this is definitely not the case anymore. Supply will be relatively stable and the demand, especially in Europe, looks good.”

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