

■ NATIONAL

SA citrus farmers say US tariffs threaten 35,000 jobs

The world's second largest citrus exporter after Spain, SA ships produce worth over \$100m a year to America

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by NELSON BANYA



Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa warns of dire consequences. Picture: SUPPLIED

Tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump will hurt citrus farms and could potentially affect 35,000 jobs, a farmers' association said on Tuesday.

Trump imposed a 31% tariff on US imports from SA on April 2, when he announced a 10% baseline tariff on all imports and higher targeted duties on dozens of countries.

SA, the world's second-largest citrus exporter after Spain, ships between 5%-6% of its produce to the US, earning more than \$100m annually.

Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) said in a statement.

Towns such as Citrusdal in the Western Cape, which are heavily dependent on citrus exports to the US, could be hit especially hard, CGA chair Gerrit van der Merwe said.

“The severity and immediate nature of the impending tariffs could mean that towns like it now face either increased unemployment or maybe even total economic collapse,” Van der Merwe said. “There is immense anxiety in our communities.”

A total of 35,000 jobs are directly connected to SA's citrus exports, he added.

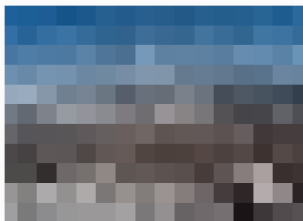
With farmers starting to pack citrus destined for the US market this week, growers have called on the government “to prioritise immediate negotiations with the US on tariff reductions or exemptions on citrus”.

Africa's most advanced economy has said it will not retaliate against the US, its second largest bilateral trading partner after China. Instead, SA says it will seek to negotiate exemptions and quota agreements.

SA has also said Trump's tariffs effectively nullified the benefits African countries have enjoyed under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), which grants qualifying states duty-free access to the US market.

The 25-year-old trade initiative is set to expire in September.

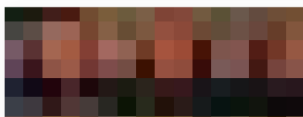
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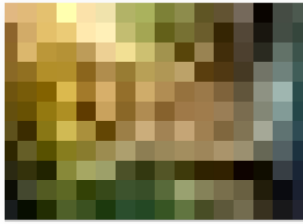
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