

SA Citrus Growers' Association CEO urges government to expedite negotiations with U.S.



In the latest update from the CEO of South Africa's Citrus Growers' Association, Boitshoko Ntshabele addressed the U.S.-imposed tariffs on South Africa, saying the 90-day reprieve is an incentive for the country to expedite negotiations with the U.S. to conclude a lasting solution.

Ntshabele said the CGA met with the South African government and implored them to act urgently, since South African citrus growers do not pose a threat to U.S. citrus growers.

"Our high-quality citrus sustains consumer interest when US local citrus is out of season, eventually benefitting US growers when we hand over at the end of our season," he added. "U.S. demand for SA's quality citrus is clearly shown by the increase in exports to the U.S. since 2017. The amount of citrus exported to the US has almost doubled to 6,5 million cartons since then. It is also estimated that 20,000 jobs up and down the supply chain in the US are linked to the US-SA citrus trade."

The CEO opened the letter by stating that the tariffs imposed by the U.S. president will hurt South African citrus farms and the rural communities that depend on them, and emphasized the importance of the South African government prioritizing immediate negotiations with the U.S. for "tariff reductions or exemptions on citrus exports."

He added that a 30% tariff would render South African citrus uncompetitive in the U.S. market, especially since the baseline U.S. tariff would only cost 10% for South Africa's citrus competitors, Peru and Chile, in South America. The tariff hike would also add \$4.25 per carton to the U.S. market.