

South Africa revises citrus export forecast upward

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 15 August 2025

Industry now expected to ship some 188mn (15kg) cartons – up from the pre-season predictions of 171mn cartons



Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the CGA

Strong international demand for processing grade juicing oranges and lemons has helped lift South Africa's export crop forecast for 2025.

Favourable growing conditions, together with enhanced production efficiencies, have also contributed to the increase in this year's shipment estimate, while stronger Northern Hemisphere demand contributed to significant volumes of lemons and oranges being shipped in the early part of the season.

This has caused the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) to adjust its export projections for the current season upward, after its latest round of Variety Focus Group meetings.

It is now estimated that more than 188mn cartons (15kg) will be exported this season, a 10 per cent increase on the pre-season estimate of 171mn cartons.

"The sector continues to work closely with its partners to ensure steady and stable delivery to all markets. Industry leaders remain focused on delivering a successful season," said CGA's CEO Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele.

He noted that the Valencia orange forecast is largely in line with the five-year average and the total volumes fit within the CGA's long-term growth strategy.

"Volumes alone are of course just one metric by which to gauge the success of a season," he said. "Apart from trade turmoil, our growers are also impacted by rising input costs and the EU's continued unscientific and unfair plant health trade barriers," Ntshabele said.

He noted that the revised forecast puts the industry on course to achieve its targets. "But for jobs to be created out of these volumes, the increased volumes of citrus must find markets," he said. "Therefore, market retention and expansion is essential. Not improving market access across the board – including the US, China, India, Japan and others – will result in a missed opportunity for serious job creation. We are hopeful that the South African government will continue to assist with expanding market access in the future."

Ntshabele pointed out that growers and exporters should keep in touch with the markets to ensure the right quantities and quality products are delivered. "The quality of the fruit is great. The whole season has been about two weeks earlier than in 2024, allowing for a smooth transition back to Northern Hemisphere supply," he said.

Paul Hardman, chief operating officer of the CGA, added: "In general, the ports have been much more efficient in 2025, in part due to added equipment and new management strategies. This has helped to get fruit out a little earlier than usual. However, with a larger projected crop, it will be important to keep the fruit moving through the ports swiftly over the next three weeks".

Regarding the 30 per cent US tariff imposed on South African citrus from 7 August, Ntshabele noted that the Southern Hemisphere citrus season was well passed its peak, and local citrus growers had managed to accelerate shipments to the US ahead of the deadline, which has lessened some of the effects of the tariff.

"But should a mutually beneficial trade deal not be concluded, our next export season will unfortunately feel the full effect of the tariff. Rural communities could then be hit hard," he

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