

SA growers launch SummerStar Ruby grapefruit drive in Europe

A group of South African citrus growers have joined forces to boost demand for grapefruit in Europe, launching a collaborative marketing campaign under the new SummerStar Ruby Grapefruit brand.



Source: Supplied

The initiative, led by a dedicated committee within the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) of South Africa, aims to reposition grapefruit as a sweet, vibrant and versatile summer fruit, moving away from its reputation as a bitter, old-fashioned health food.

Rebranding for growth

The growers, all Star Ruby producers, voluntarily pooled resources into a shared marketing fund to support the initiative, which targets European consumers during the peak summer season.

"The CGA's Grapefruit Variety Focus Group recognised the urgent need to change how grapefruit is viewed. They've historically been seen as bitter and old-fashioned. But SummerStar Rubies are sweet

tangy and versatile and will help elevate food and cocktail menus if given the opportunity," says Ben Landman, chairman of the Grapefruit Variety Focus Group.

Collaboration over competition

Instead of promoting individual farm brands, growers agreed to collaborate on a unified brand idea focusing on increasing demand for the entire grapefruit category.

"By working together, we are building a stronger future for the industry," Landman adds. "South Africa is one of the major suppliers of Star Ruby Grapefruits globally, which presents huge growth potential."

"It made good business sense to rebrand and position it as a healthy and affordable summer fruit, capitalising on the warm European months when consumers are looking for fresh and easy foods."

Europe an ideal market

The group selected Europe, and Germany specifically, as the campaign's launchpad, given its established citrus trade ties with South Africa and reliable market infrastructure. Germany's consumer preference for health-forward, sustainably produced products, combined with price sensitivity, makes it a natural fit.

Nicci Stewart, SummerStar Ruby campaign manager, said the focus is not on introducing a new product, but on reshaping existing perceptions.

"Many European consumers already know and appreciate SummerStar Ruby Grapefruits for their vibrant colour, sweetness, and quality. Our focus is on winning over consumers who only associate grapefruit with bitterness — or with something eaten when they're feeling sick or visiting their grandparents."

The campaign will spotlight SummerStar Ruby Grapefruits as a summer lifestyle ingredient, promoting their use in cocktails, salads and beach picnics.

Sustainable, premium and affordable

"SummerStar Rubies tick all of these boxes. They are produced in world-class growing conditions in South Africa, meet strict EU import standards, and thanks to advanced cold-chain technology, they arrive fresh and flavourful," says Landman.

The SummerStar Ruby campaign will run in Germany through the 2025 European summer, with plans to expand into additional European markets in 2026.

"This is just the beginning of grapefruit's reinvention. This marketing initiative is vital to the industry's long-term success, and thanks to the efforts of this group of growers, SummerStar Ruby Grapefruits are ready to shine."

are about to have their day in the sun,” Stewart concluded.

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