

Countdown begins to crucial G20 meeting in Johannesburg

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 4 November 2025



**South African president Cyril Ramaphosa has been wooing international leaders.
Photo: GCIS**

With the G20 Summit in South Africa just weeks away, the country's fruit sector will be wondering if it has made the most of the opportunities that this unique gathering offers.

Is the country seizing the moment and pursuing trade deals that have been mooted for many months and during many pre-Summit meetings? Or is the window of opportunity slowly disappearing?

The South African president has held several meetings with heads of state in Asia and Europe in the hope it will pay off when these powerful nations gather in Johannesburg later this month.

“Various trips have been undertaken in the past 12 months with ministers and the president as government sought to improve market access and diversify countries to which South Africa can export,” said Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the Citrus Growers Association (CGA).

“As the CGA, we monitor the progress made on this front, but concrete gains have unfortunately not materialised yet. We know that these types of trade discussions are never a singular action that delivers a singular result, and thus some of the kickstarted talks can drag on for some time. With disruptions, as we have noted before, there is a lot of difficulty and drama, but also opportunity. The Trump tariffs were indeed a disruptive force.”

Ntshabele noted that South Africa is in dire need of economic growth and job creation, and must therefore urgently guide these trade opportunities towards some crescendo. “Last week we read about the government’s discussions with the US on a framework trade deal. We also know that this week some deals were concluded on the margins of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) meetings,” he said.

Other observers said there had been a number of key breakthroughs for the South African fruit sector in recent months. They pointed out that the pressure resulting from the Trump tariffs has prompted South Africa to shift its attention to new markets, while also retaining and expanding its ties with Europe.

According to Ntshabele, the agriculture sector remains concerned about the outlook for 2026 in the event that South Africa fails to agree to a framework deal with the US, as most other countries have done.

“In a sense, the citrus industry was lucky in that the tariff imposition was mitigated by the frontloading of shipments prior to mid-August. The simple truth is that a 30 per cent tariff makes us uncompetitive in the US as our competitors sit at a 10 per cent tariff,” he said.

For the stonefruit, table grape, avocado, apple and pear sectors the outlook for the new season is less clear.

With a record season behind them, citrus growers reported that they have had a beautiful spring with blossoms on the citrus trees in orchards across our country. “It is already almost summer. One hopes the potential of the 2026 season will be realised,” Ntshabele concluded.