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Citrus industry welcomes US tariff exemption on oranges

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The
Citrus
Growers'

Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has welcomed the new US tariff exemptions, which includes oranges as citrus variety.

The association stated in a November 15 news release that, even though the 2025 season had concluded, the new exemption was "great news" for the 2026 season, which started around April 2026. "The exemption once again makes South African oranges competitive in the US market, a market that holds opportunities for increased exports and local job creation."

The 30% US tariffs on South African imports only came into effect in August, towards the end of the South Africa's 2025

season – it therefore had a limited impact on citrus exports to the US, especially because growers were able to increase and fast-track shipments to the US before the tariff deadline.

"South Africa has been a partner to the US in citrus supply for many years. In their summer, when their own growers are out of season, we supply them with quality citrus. This keeps consumers in the category, ensuring stability and access to affordable imported fruit," explained CGA CEO Dr **Boitshoko Ntshabele**.

"Supply steadiness is not a luxury, it is a vital hedge against volatility for the American citrus industry, and an example of how global trade benefits everyday American consumers. Citrus as a fresh, healthy product is also uniquely valuable. It helps keep Americans healthy.

"This announcement takes some pressure off our community. There will be some big smiles on the farm come Monday morning. We have been deeply concerned about the future of our valley for many months," added CGA chairperson **Gerrit van der Merwe**.

"As is understood, mandarin (soft citrus) varieties are, however, not exempt from tariffs. Our mandarins are popular in the US. The US should consider extending the current exemption to include mandarins and other citrus varieties, because they share similar market dynamics and supply chain vulnerabilities," said Ntshabele.

Applying tariffs to mandarins risks creating price spikes, supply shortages and inflationary pressures, the association

argued.

There is a marked appetite for South African citrus in the US. Since 2017, citrus exports to the US from South Africa have almost doubled. 🇺🇸

Phone: +27 (0)11 622 3744

Email: newsdesk@engineeringnews.co.za

Website: www.engineeringnews.co.za

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