

Tom Kuijpers (Anaco Greeve) on South African citrus season:

“The coming weeks will show whether it ends in a final sprint or if the last mile proves the hardest”

Halfway through September, we can certainly say that the beginning of the end of, at least, our citrus season has arrived. As every year, another season has brought plenty of challenges, success stories, and setbacks. South Africa remains the supplier of choice for Anaco & Greeve when it comes to citrus, with mandarins and lemons playing an especially important role," says Tom Kuijpers.



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"Looking at the figures from the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), we still see a solid increase in shipped fruit, both globally and to the European market alone. For example, in week 37 YTD, we see 25% more tangerines, 21% more lemons,

36% more oranges, and 16% more grapefruit shipped to Europe," Tom says.

"That, combined with a, to my mind at the moment, delightfully hot summer, makes the time-honoured saying among fresh produce traders 'Hot weather, slow trade', a hard reality in July and August. Citrus, apart from limes and lemons, once again proved especially vulnerable to this phenomenon. Qualitatively, however – at least with us – it has been an excellent year, with very few problems overall."



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"Put bluntly, the past two months have not been easy at all for mandarins, with large arrivals everywhere and very limited sales, as both retail and wholesale have actually bought less than they should have. Meanwhile, there now seems to be a small bright spot at the end of the tunnel in terms of sales, but the oversized stocks have led to mediocre pricing," the importer reflects.



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Sweet C

"Right now, it is Nadorcott that has to carry demand. Prices vary widely depending on quality, size, and brand. I hear prices of €10 being mentioned, but whether that is necessary, you should ask the people selling at that level. In my view, the healthy price point for Nadorcott should still be around €12.50–14, depending on size and brand. On that note, we can proudly report that Anaco & Greeve International, as the exclusive recipient in the Netherlands of the Sweet C brand, has managed to build a brand that is highly appreciated by many customers across Europe, for which they are certainly willing to pay extra. Orri is doing better in terms of price, but remains a mandarin that is not equally appreciated everywhere. Prices of between €15 and €17 are certainly strong, but demand is not huge either."



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"With lemons, we have had a remarkable season, where large volumes were shipped, but the market still held up well. In mid-June and early July, we even hoped for 'absurd' prices above €35, as we saw at the end of the 2024 season. Those hopes did not materialise. Meanwhile, there has been a significant price correction, but we are still above €20 for the good sizes, which is not a price anyone should complain about. With the first Spanish and Turkish fruit no doubt arriving soon, there is some nervousness among importers about a second correction, where prices may become more difficult, especially for fruit with high MGPs issued in RSA."



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Illusions in orange market

"In oranges, it has actually been the opposite. After the last two years, many importers thought oranges would perform well anyway, but that has turned out to be an illusion. Prices were reasonable at the start for the first Navels, but soon there was too much large fruit, with Open Top Navels and Navel Lates in particular suffering from very low kilogram prices. Small sizes have done well, though, and we still see prices above €16 for juicing. Still, there is quite a bit of shipping from RSA to get ahead of the October 15 import duties, so whether those prices hold remains to be seen."



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All in all, as mentioned, it's a season with its challenges, but name one that doesn't have them, for any product group. Across the board, I don't think there is too much to complain about, but neither can we call it a spectacular season. The coming weeks will show whether there will be a strong final sprint or whether, as so often, the last mile proves the hardest. As always, the above is just my personal view of the past two months, and I stress that I cannot look into other people's barns, wallets, or quality reports. I certainly do not hold all the wisdom," Tom concludes.



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