



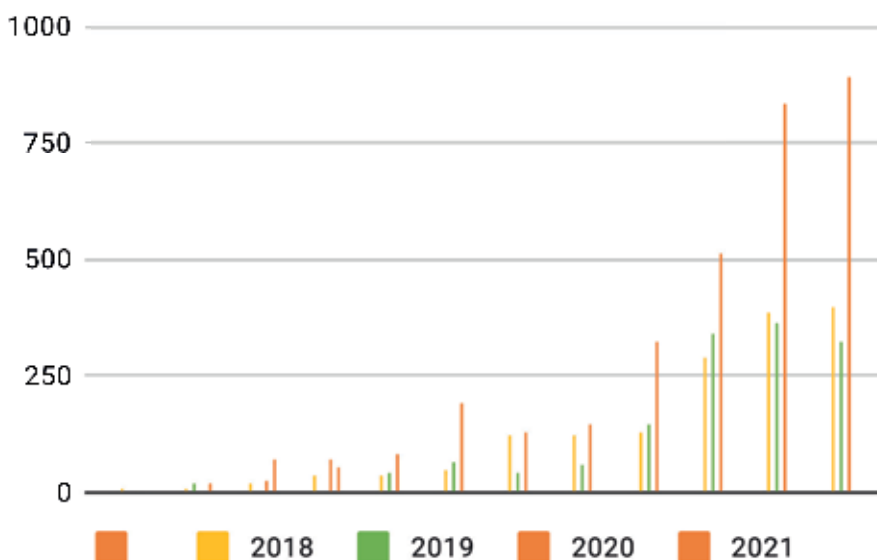
RISE

in early lemon production and export

It is well known that the planting of lemon varieties in Southern Africa has been very high in recent years. By Mitchell Brooke

The crop estimate for lemon varieties indicates that some 40 million cartons could be exported by 2025, up from 20 million cartons during the 2018 season. What is noticeable however, is how the volume of earlier production is on the increase. Production of lemons for export now commences in early January with approximately four million cartons already being packed and shipped by the end of March – this is likely to increase every year as young trees start producing.

Chart 1: Production of lemons for export to end March 2018-2021, by week (Source: PPECB)





Hoedspruit and Limpopo River seem to be the two areas that are producing the early lemons for export. Annually more than half of these lemons are being shipped to the Middle East. What's interesting is the sudden increase in the export of early lemons in bulk bins during 2020, which amounted to 800 000 cartons.

Going forward, annual tracking of the production and export of lemons leading up to the end of March will be critical. This period of lemon exports could make a marked impact on market prices of lemons for the remainder of the season. Particularly if there is an oversupply to one particular market, which is what happened in 2020 with the marked uptake in exports to the Middle East. 🍋

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Table 1: Export pallets of lemons to end March 2018-2020, by production region

Sum of Palette Quantity	Season		
Production	2018	2019	2020
Hoedspruit	6,824	3,104	11,425
Limpopo River	2,076	1,896	2,990
Nelspruit	1,287	551	864
Nkwalini	1,141	100	226
Letsitele	755	600	2,409
Onderberg	100	38	180
S.R.Valley	78	522	340
Senwes	39	523	639
Boland	4	9	11
Unknown	1	1	22
Patensie		23	
W.Cape		47	273
Burgersfort			345
Orange River			342
Grand Total	12,305	7,414	20,066

Table 1: Export pallets of lemons to end March 2018-2020, by market region

Sum of Palette Quantity	Season		
Region Description	2018	2019	2020
Middle East	7,593	4,667	12,617
Russian Federation	2,174	680	3,308
South East Asia	2,144	1,896	3,180
North-America	198	59	340
European Union	120	3	180
Indian Ocean Islands	43	20	128
Africa	33	89	94
Europe Other			219
Grand Total	12,305	7,414	20,066