

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

EU citrus looks for alternative sources amid more CBS restrictions

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The South African industry exports about 600 000 tonnes of citrus to markets in Europe, with 400 000 tonnes of the fruit going to the Netherlands.

Jaguar – the largest importer of South African fruit based in The Netherlands – is reportedly seeking alternative sources of fruit supply amid unconfirmed rumblings about more citrus black spot restrictions being imposed in Europe.

According to a FreshPlaza.com article, Jaguar imports 58 300 pallets of oranges from South Africa each year, along with 25 300 pallets of grapes and 110 000 pallets of other fruit. South African imports make up around 20% of the company's volume of imported fruit.

Jaguar ambassador Kees Rijnhout was cited by the online fruit producers' news site as

saying: "Every year we are a little bit scared, (and) looking to other parts of the world to get fruit so that once there is black spot early in the season we have alternatives."

Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) CEO Justin Chadwick, was quoted by daily newspaper, BDlive, as saying that he was surprised to hear importers were concerned because stakeholders in Europe had signalled the country was in a good position with regard to its exports.

"We had few interceptions in 2015 — actually we had half of what we had in 2014 — and we also had a visit by technical experts from the European Union (EU) this year. Their observations were that we did not need any extra measures," said Chadwick.

Although the ban has been lifted, South African growers have been asked to implement additional measures to keep CBS at bay, according to various news reports.

Rijnhout, who sits on the Dutch black spot advisory board, will be part of a business delegation that Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte will bring to SA next month. He reportedly said that Dutch consumers did not care about CBS on the fruit.

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