

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

SA gets a thumbs-up from EU over CBS management

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A report released last week by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) on its audit carried out in South Africa earlier this year is a major boost for South African citrus, according to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick.

"It shows that the industry's Citrus Black Spot (CBS) risk management system has been rigorously and diligently applied," he says.

The FVO is an independent EU Commission service tasked with food safety and plant health. It carries out audits and inspections to ensure that EU legislation is properly implemented and enforced.

"...The FVO team found that the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) had reviewed and strengthened significantly its export procedures and system of official checks to take account of the outcome of the 2014 export season and the investigations carried out following findings of non-compliance and notifications of interception from the EU..." according to the executive summary.

It goes on to say that the report greatly enhances the likelihood of stable and predictable trade conditions for South African citrus exporters to the EU as it demonstrates that South Africa's risk management system is "...fully in line with the revised EU requirements for the import of such fruit from South Africa..."

The South African citrus industry has gone to great lengths to ensure compliance with, and a commitment to meeting the European Union's requirements, said Chadwick. This has been achieved at enormous cost to the SA government and citrus industry and should be seen against the backdrop of an ongoing scientific dispute since 1992 on the true risk of CBS being transmitted to citrus production areas in the southern parts of Europe."

The SA citrus industry employs an estimated 100 000 people and exports account for 80% of its R9.4bn annual revenue, 40% of which is generated from exports to the EU.

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