

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Cracker of a year for SA citrus exporters

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Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers Association.

It's been a cracker of a year for South Africa's citrus export industry which has, in three years, increased export volumes from 100 million 15-kg cartons to 120 million.

According to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick, this has been achieved on the back of an aggressive drive to open new markets and retain and optimise existing markets. "Big growth has taken place in markets in Asia, while the EU has remained the destination of choice for the majority of the fruit," he said.

"Although oranges have steadied at 80 million cartons, the growth was led by lemon exports which increased from 10 to 15 million cartons over four years. A similar increase is anticipated for soft citrus in the next five years."

There's more good news in terms of market prices. "The prices received in most markets were higher than those achieved in 2014," said Chadwick. "In particular prices in northern Europe exceeded 2014 for all citrus products other than lemons."

With the rand in free fall against the dollar – from R11.56 in January to R13.80 by November, a depreciation of almost 20% - exporters were clearly getting more in rand

terms for their product, said Chadwick.

“But in the longer term the weak rand could fuel inflation and increase input prices.”

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