Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele
30 October 2026
Week 44/26

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."
(Wayne Gretzky)

THE AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (AGOA)

Access to the United States market remains strategically important for the South African citrus industry. We attended a briefing session with the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition this week on AGOA. AGOA is particularly significant for growers in the Western and Northern Cape Provinces, the Citrus Black Spot-free regions permitted to export to the US. Our exports to the US are complimentary to their production but we help keep consumers in the citrus category in the US off season. The potential loss of benefits under the AGOA is a significant concern, as it would expose South African citrus exports to the applicable US rate of duty, generally ranging between 1.5 and 2.5 U.S. cents/kg depending on the product and season. The challenge is further compounded by the additional 12.5% Section 301 tariff.

While Chilean and Peruvian exporters face the same Section 301 tariff, their Free Trade Agreements with the U.S. provide duty-free access under the normal tariff schedule. South Africa, by contrast, could face both the Section 301 tariff and the applicable rate of duty (without AGOA), placing our exporters at a competitive disadvantage, particularly given higher logistics costs and longer shipping distances.

The current US exemption from Section 301 tariffs on imported oranges globally, underscores the importance of year-round supply and consumer demand. However, the US rate of duty would still apply on South African oranges should AGOA benefits fall away.

THE EU OMNIBUS

This is a European Commission proposal to simplify food and feed legislation while strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the EU agri-food system. Of greatest concern are proposed changes that could affect South African producers from protecting their export crop from pests and disease. It could allow active substance maximum residue levels (MRLs) to be reduced to technically zero in the EU when a substance is not authorised for use there, as opposed to scientifically justified consumer health risk assessments, which is more relevant for when setting MRLs.

EU governments are largely supporting the Commission's plan to effectively ban measurable residues of certain active substances in imported food, subject to an impact assessment. The European Parliament has yet to settle its position, with the voting now tentatively scheduled to happen in December 2026.

Of course, not just African exports are at risk. Agricultural exports from the Americas could face stricter EU rules if the proposed restrictions become law. A recent economic report predicted a worst-case scenario of a 41% decline in total imported agricultural products to Europe, with a sharp 92% decline in citrus imports, assuming that growers cannot adapt to using alternative crop protection products.

The CGA, along with South African government, is lobbying for consumer health risk assessments to remain the bases on which MRLs are established. Production conditions, pest and disease pressures and good agricultural practices differ across regions. EU authorisation status should therefore not be treated as a blanket test for the "safety" of imported agricultural goods.

SABO SURVEY ON BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS IN AGRICULTURE

SABO is conducting a market survey to better understand growers' experiences, needs, and challenges regarding biological products in agriculture. The feedback will help identify gaps in the market and support the development of suitable solutions that address growers' needs and farming conditions. We would appreciate your assistance in participating in this 10 minute multiple-choice questions on Google Forms.

Survey link: https://forms.gle/z8xua3G93KNSYn1w6. Deadline for completing the survey is 30 November 2026.

INTERESTING FACTS

Some citrus varieties can be used to make marmalades or curd which can be canned.

For the latest South African citrus packed and shipped volumes, please visit the CGA website:

Stats 01 – Shipping & Cold Stores
Stock Statistics Dashboard | CGA

CGA CITRUS SUMMIT

Registration for the 2027 CGA Citrus Summit is now open to ***everyone!*** We encourage you to register early to secure your place at the Summit from 9-11 March 2027!

There are still some sponsorship opportunities available – should you be interested, please contact tanya@cga.co.za.

PACKED AND SHIPPED VOLUMES

End of week 43 million 15 kg cartons	*Packed*	*Packed*	*Packed*	*Shipped*	*Shipped*	*Original Estimate*	*Latest Prediction*	*Final Packed*	*Vision 260*
SOURCE: PPECB / AGRIHUB	2024	2025	**2026**	2025	**2026**	2026	**2026**	2025	**2026**
***Grapefruit**	14.4 m	15.3 m	15.3 m	15.2 m	14.9 m	17.8 m	15.3 m	15.3 m	15.5m
Lemons	34.7 m	41.4 m	51 m	40.9 m	48.5 m	45.9 m	51 m	41.6 m	43.4m
Mandarins	41.7 m	53.5 m	50.7 m	52 m	49.2 m	52.7 m	50.7 m	53.5 m	50m
Navels	25.1 m	31.5 m	25.2 m	30.9 m	24.5 m	30 m	25.2 m	31.6 m	32.3m
Valencia	48.7 m	61.8 m	58.8 m	59.4 m	55.9 m	63 m	58.8 m	62 m	67.8m
Total	**164.6 m**	**203.5 m**	**201 m**	**198.4 m**	**193 m**	**209.4 m**	**201 m**	**204 m**	**209m**

* **Grapefruit Packed Distribution**: Class 1 & 2 volumes remained relatively stable at 12.5 m cartons (2026) vs 13.4 m (2025) and 13 m (2024), while PP volumes increased to 2.8 m cartons from 1.8 m (2025) and 1.4 m (2024).