Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele
13 November 2026
Week 46/26

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

"It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." (Epictetus)

FINAL FIGURES 2026 EXPORT SEASON

This week, the CGA released the final figures for the 2026 season. Growers packed 201 million 15kg cartons for export, 1.5% below the 204 million packed in 2025 and 4% below our April pre-season estimate of 209.4 million. Behind these numbers, however, is a season that tested our growers like few before it.

Most production areas delivered large yields on farm, yet poor conditions across the value chain meant many saw their profitability decimated. A season like this must never be repeated. We know how hard 2026 has been for everyone. The CGA remains, as ever, firmly committed to supporting the industry. Now is the time to take stock, stand together, and chart a clear path to safeguard the future of South African citrus.

The Middle East war limited shipping capacity and left all markets short of containers. Some ports could not be reached safely, while those that could were heavily congested. Key markets such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia were often accessible only via extremely long routes. Shipping costs and farm inputs such as diesel soared to punishing levels. Meanwhile, a large, long-lasting Egyptian orange crop, often competing on price rather than quality, narrowed our window into Europe. Consumer spending also declined significantly. The weather added to the strain. Heavy rains in Mpumalanga and Limpopo produced large fruit that consumers did not favour, while destructive floods swept the Western and Eastern Cape. And while the newly appointed PSP at Durban Pier 2 aligns with the CGA's long-term support for privatisation, significant backlogs disrupted shipping and caused missed market windows. Most of these factors created a perfect storm and a serious mismatch between supply and demand in critical markets. When fruit misses its window, value-chain costs remain while its value falls. With so much of the cost incurred after packing, every carton that arrives out of step with market requirements erodes returns exponentially.

Looking ahead, the CGA is now focused on collective action on all the areas that lies within our control. There is much we can do together to protect the industry against another season like this. The industry as a whole must achieve a closer match between what it supplies and what markets demand, by market, specification, and timing. Better, more timely data on market demand, specifications and timing can enable growers, exporters, and value chain partners to plan packing and shipments against genuine demand. We will press, harder than ever, for more reliable port and marine logistics. The CGA will work with shipping companies and logistics partners to secure dependable capacity, schedules, and routes for growers. Furthermore, we will also consider industry marketing initiatives in key countries, building on our current marketing investment in India.

It was, unfortunately, a season that will go down in the history books for all the wrong reasons. But we've withstood storms before, and we are ready to do the work needed to rise above this one.

INTERESTING FACTS

What were the busiest shipping weeks this year according to variety? Lemons, week 28; Grapefruit, week 18; Mandarins, week 34; Navels, week 27; and Valencias, week 36.

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

There are still spots available for the 2027 CGA Citrus Summit, but it is filling up fast. We encourage you to register early to secure your place at the Summit from 9-11 March 2027!

We also still have a few sponsorship opportunities available – should you be interested, please contact tanya@cga.co.za.

PACKED AND SHIPPED VOLUMES

End of week 45 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	15.4 m	15.2 m	14.9 m	17.8 m	15.4 m	15.3 m	15.5m
Lemons	34.7 m	41.5 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	49.3 m	52.7 m	50.7 m	53.5 m	50m
Navels	25.1 m	31.5 m	25.2 m	31 m	24.5 m	30 m	25.2 m	31.6 m	32.3m
Valencia	48.7 m	61.9 m	58.8 m	59.7 m	56.2 m	63 m	58.8 m	62 m	67.8m
Total	**164.6 m**	**203.7 m**	**201.1 m**	**198.8 m**	**193.4 m**	**209.4 m**	**201.1 m**	**204 m**	**209m**

***Grapefruit Packed Distribution**: Class 1 & 2 volumes remained relatively stable at 12.6 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).

THE CGA GROUP OF COMPANIES (RIVER BIOSCIENCE, XSIT, CGA CULTIVAR COMPANY, CGA GROWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND CITRUS ACADEMY) AND THE RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY CITRUS RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL, ALL PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO THE CITRUS GROWERS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA