



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CITRUS EXPORT STANDARDS UPDATE

by
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Promulgation of the Export Citrus Standards and Requirements

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) promulgated on the 29th April 2011 the 2011 Export Citrus Quality Standards. Note the following key point:

- **EU Labelling Requirements – Change in placement on carton**

During the Citrus Marketing Forum (CMF) meeting held 25th March 2011 concern was raised over the introduction of new labelling requirements within the EU Community Standards for citrus whereby any post-harvest treatment declarations must be made on the business end of the carton. At the request of the CMF an application was made by CGA to DAFF for a dispensation to allow carton manufacturers and exporters time to adjust to these new requirements. This would help to address the considerable administrative burden and cost brought about by these new requirements. **A dispensation has been granted for one year.** Growers and exporters will have to comply with this requirement from 2012 but are advised to initiate changing systems as soon as possible. CGA will be co-ordinating with stakeholders, service providers and DAFF to make the transition to the new requirements as easy as possible.

Update of the Recommended Usage Restrictions Document

Please note a number of changes in the latest (April 2011) addition of the *Recommended Usage Restrictions for Plant Protection Products on Southern African Export Citrus* – available on the CGA website (www.cga.co.za). In most cases the changes mean recommended restrictions can be relaxed. Note that the EU Methidathion MRL on citrus (5.0 mg/kg) will become 0.01 mg/kg on the 21st October 2011; CGA/CRI have previously communicated this anticipated change but can now provide the precise date when it will be effective.

GLOBALG.A.PTOUR2011

Growers tracking developments around adoption of V4 of the GLOBALG.A.P Standards will find the following points on the discussion at the GLOBALG.A.PTOUR2011 event held 11th & 12th May in Cape Town interesting:

- No producers attended the conference (out of 60 participants)! It would seem the conference cost made attendance prohibitive. This message was passed on to the Secretariat and that this prevented true stakeholder engagement.
- Overall the changes to the new version are not numerous but significant. Presentations have been prepared and are available on the GLOBALG.A.P website demonstrating the key changes. More importantly, a *National Interpretation Guideline* of V4 will be available from August 2011 for South African suppliers.
- An Afrikaans version of V4 was approved and will be posted on the GLOBALG.A.P website shortly. CGA will also have a copy on hand once available.
- There is still uncertainty about where the social elements (GRASP) will fit into the Ethical Trade programme being developed by Fruit South Africa. Obviously the goal is to eliminate duplication but also ensure growers will be able to demonstrate to buyers their compliance to SA Law as inexpensively as possible. Will GRASP be the right tool for this? Your input and comments would be appreciated and can be directed to Paul Hardman at CGA (ph@cga.co.za).

Residue Testing for GLOBALGAP Audits:

Some GLOBALGAP Certification Bodies are requesting producers to conduct residue testing for all active substances used on the farm in accordance with Critical Control Point 8.6.2. Compliance to such a requirement would be extremely expensive and is unnecessary. Producers should be aware that this is NOT in fact an obligatory GLOBALGAP requirement WHERE an alternative risk-assessment can be shown. CGA have repeatedly raised this at the National Technical Workgroup meetings and will continue to do so. The risk-assessment may include *some* residue testing, but this would be used to demonstrate that the approach to handling plant protection products on the farm



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is in fact working. Growers should point to the Recommended Usage Restrictions document as a science-based approach that has already assessed the risk of an MRL exceedance.

EU Considering ECOLABLE:

The European Commission is considering introducing an official label that will represent fresh fruit and vegetable products that fit somewhere between “organic” and “conventional” product. More details are available and should you have an opinion on this proposal please contact CGA. A Stakeholder Survey has been prepared in order to obtain views from interested parties.

Online FBO Registration with DAFF:

DAFF have been developing an online Food Business Operator (FBO) database to handle registrations and the maintenance of FBO information. DAFF require growers to update their information as soon as possible but certainly before the next round of Phytosanitary Registrations (November 2011). A two-step process is followed: 1) A once-off online registration enabling permission to enter the database and 2) Update of the FBO information itself. Grower can go through this process by following this link: <http://fbo.daff.gov.za>

Indonesia Food Safety Import Requirements:

An application has been made to Indonesian authorities requesting recognition of the South African Food Safety System, which would reduce the burden currently placed on exports of citrus to this market (e.g., additional residue testing). No official response has been received via diplomatic channels beside that the Indonesians have received the application. DAFF have engaged the Indonesian Embassy, the DAFF Agricultural attaché, and DAFF Foreign Affairs division to try obtain the desired recognition.

Malaysian Food Safety Import Requirements:

Exporters have brought to the attention of DAFF recent communication around new labelling requirements for imported fruit into Malaysia (indicated as 3P labelling requirements) that would apply from 1st July 2011. CGA have been investigating whether these requirements are official and apply to SA product entering Malaysia or semi-commercial,

such as some SABS Standards which are voluntary. DAFF have sent correspondence to the Malaysian official requesting clarity on this issue, but to date no response has been received. DAFF will now follow up and make a further request to the FAMA to assess whether the current Citrus Export Standard and Requirement labelling requirements are not sufficient. More information is available from CGA on the 3P labelling requirement, but exporters are also encouraged to speak to their Malaysian receivers to determine how they should be responding.

Viet Nam Food Safety Import Requirements:

CGA communicated with producers about the forthcoming Food Safety Requirement for product exported to Viet Nam, applicable from 1st July 2011. DAFF are currently finalizing a response to the Vietnamese authorities detailing how the official export certification process is implemented in South Africa. Once DAFF documentation is complete, CGA will be engaged to discuss any outstanding concerns before sending this data package across to Viet Nam. Only at this point will more information be available about what growers are required to do to send fruit to this market. CGA raised the concern about the tight timelines but DAFF do not foresee a disruption to trade and hope to conclude this process by the end of May 2011.