

Boitshoko Ntshabele 09 May 2025

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.” — Nelson Mandela

MARKETS CAN FACILITATE GROWING THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

In the past few weeks, I’ve had the privilege of traversing the citrus-producing regions of our country to meet citrus growers. It has been truly enlightening to meet men and women who dedicate their lives to cultivating the world-class fruit we export. I encountered growers who are not only masters of their craft but also forward-thinkers, constantly seeking new ways to improve quality, adopt sustainable practices, and navigate the challenges of the global market. From implementing cutting-edge irrigation techniques to pioneering biological pest control methods, their commitment to excellence is evident.

Among our growers, market access remains a topic of serious interest, as it should. The CGA remains focussed on retaining existing markets and expanding into new territories. While there is tariff uncertainty regarding the US market, there is a clear argument to be made for the mutually beneficial nature of SA-US citrus exports – an argument representatives of the South African government are making to those in Washington DC. Of course, the EU’s unscientific CBS and FCM measures also remain a market access issue. This is being addressed through a World Trade Organisation dispute settlement process. There is immense promise with markets such as China, Japan and India, but in these markets unnecessary phytosanitary obstacles and high tariffs are holding back growth. The CGA has also in early April travelled to India to address these issues and we’ve just had a working visit to the Chinese Embassy, and more work is necessary to make these markets work for the us.

Expanding market access for export produce requires a concerted and collaborative effort between government and farmers. Governments play a crucial role in negotiating favourable trade agreements, streamlining export processes, and providing essential infrastructure and support services. Farmers, on the other hand, bring invaluable expertise in production, quality control, and sustainable farming practices. Working in tandem, they can identify and capitalize on new market opportunities, overcome trade barriers, and ensure that South African produce continues to meet international standards.

Increased citrus exports can drive inclusive growth by stimulating economic activity across the value chain, creating jobs in farming, processing, logistics, and related sectors. This expansion can also benefit historically disadvantaged communities through targeted development initiatives, skills training programs, and the empowerment of black farmers to continue to participate in and profit from the export market. It is in our hands!

CITRUS SUSTAINABILITY FORUM (CSF) – CARBON FOCUS

At the CSF on Friday 9 May there were two presentations dealing with opportunities for growers to be involved in carbon credit projects. Should you be interested in this topic please contact Albert Coetzee at the CGA.

PACKED AND SHIPPED

End of Week 18 Million 15 Kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed	Vision 260
SOURCE: PPECB / AGRIHUB	2023	2024	2025	2024	2025	2025	2025	2024	2025
Grapefruit	5.5 m	5.5 m	5.3 m	3.4 m	4.4 m	15.3 m	15.3 m	14.4 m	16.8 m
Lemons	11.5 m	9.3 m	9.3 m	6.9 m	8.9 m	32.9 m	32.9 m	34.7 m	41.5 m
Mandarins	3.7 m	4.4 m	3.0 m	2.4 m	2.8 m	44.9 m	44.9 m	41.6 m	43.9 m
Navels	0.5 m	0.6 m	0.1 m	-	-	26.1 m	26.1 m	25.1 m	21.7 m
Valencia	-	-	-	-	-	52.0 m	52.0 m	48.8 m	58.0 m
Total	21.2 m	19.8 m	17.7 m	12.7 m	16.1 m	171.1m	171.1m	164.6 m	181.9 m