

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

***“Energy and persistence
conquer all things.”
(Benjamin Franklin)***

STEADY GROWTH FOR CITRUS INDUSTRY

As every year, with Easter behind us, the citrus packhouses across our country become busy as the season starts in earnest. This is also the time of our annual export estimates. These figures indicate moderate growth. Total citrus volumes available for export are expected to increase – continuing an upward trend from 203,9mil 15kg cartons last year by approximately 3% to 5%, reaching between 210 and 215 million 15kg cartons for the 2026 season. It should be noted that the estimate assumes a late Mandarin crop that follows its recent trajectory. The late Mandarin estimates will be released at a later stage.

We are giving these estimates, mindful of the uncertainties facing the industry, including the hostilities in the Middle East and its potential impact on demand, shipping routes, as well as questions regarding fuel availability and input costs. A fragile ceasefire has been reached, but even with this development, a return to some sense of normality will not be immediate. However, with proactive decision making and adaptability by all players across the value chain, steady growth towards another strong export season remains achievable. The CGA has, given all the uncertainty and risk in the global markets, invested in generating data to support market intelligence and logistics monitoring to support the supply chain and ensure stability.

Overall, the 2026 crop points to a balanced season with fruit of high quality.

- **Lemons:** 45.9 million 15kg cartons (+10%), driven by new plantings and recovery from earlier hail damage.
- **Navel oranges:** 30 million 15kg cartons (–5% vs 2025, but +10% on 2024), comprising 13.4 million Early/Midseason and 16.6 million Late Navels.
- **Valencia oranges:** 63 million 15kg cartons (+1.6%), with regional variation and additional volumes from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique.
- **Grapefruit:** 15.7 million 17kg cartons (+16%), supported by favourable growing conditions.
- **Early Mandarin-types:** Satsumas at 1.5 million cartons; Novas at 5.6 million (–3%); Clementines at 6.2 million (–4%).

Given global instability, it is critical that, as an industry, we should focus on factors within our span of control. A stronger and engaged partnership with government should foster a focused effort towards improved market access, which should include deepening access to already existing markets, the resolution of the EU plant health constraints, and increased private-sector participation in logistics, particularly in rail. Especially viewed from within the current pressures, these elements are essential to securing our sector's future growth.

I am writing this newsletter on the back of another significant market access milestone. The Department of Agriculture and their Chinese counterparts, represented by the Chinese Ambassador, today signed an amended protocol for the export of citrus to China. The protocol offers improved plant health treatment options and will reduce costs for local growers while delivering high quality fruit to the Chinese market. This should bode well for citrus exports to that market in 2026 and into the near future.

CITRUS MARKETING FORUM

The second Citrus Marketing Forum (CMF) meeting will be held on **Friday, 24 April at 10:00 am** via **MS Teams**. Please contact Portia Magwaza at portia@cga.co.za to receive the registration link.

INTERESTING FACTS

A single citrus plant can have as many as 60,000 flowers, but only 1 percent of those flowers will turn into fruit.

CGA GROUP INFO CITRUS MARKETING FORUM (CMF)

Date: 24 April 2026

Time: 10:00am

Venue: Virtual

Link: Contact portia@cga.co.za