

RSA citrus on market development drive

With citrus production on the rise, finding markets with growth potential is a priority for the South African industry – and India is a key target

Finding growth markets has become a key objective of the South African citrus sector, which is expecting to see a significant increase in the volumes of fruit available for export over the medium- to long-term.

"India is seen as offering huge potential," says South Africa's Citrus Growers' Association (CGA). "With present volumes of about 9,000 pallets the goal is to increase this volume by tenfold during the next ten years. Most players in the Indian market believe that this is possible."

The CGA was part of a South African fruit industry delegation which showed its increased interest and commitment to the Indian market as a Gold Sponsor at Fresh Produce India, India's only international conference and expo event for the industry, which took place in Mumbai on 26-27 April.

The delegation represented Fruit South Africa and was supported by key role players from the South African industry, as well as South African diplomatic staff from New Delhi and consular staff from Mumbai.

Speaking to Asiafruit at Fresh Produce India, CGA's CEO Justin Chadwick confirmed the industry's target to increase South Africa's citrus sales to India ten-fold to 10m cartons in the next years.

"In order to make that happen role-players from Southern Africa will need to understand the dynamics of the market," explained Chadwick.

"Leading exporters and export agents are already doing this by forming joint ventures or making other arrangements with partners already active in the Indian market. These 'first movers' are beginning to establish a foothold in the trade and will benefit as the anticipated growth materialises."

Chadwick says South Africa as a country, and as an exporter of a range of excellent quality, well-priced, safe fruit, is relatively unknown in India.

While attention is now mostly on citrus (oranges), pears and apples; the Indian consumer is starting to appreciate a wider range of imported product.

"Fruit South Africa is well positioned to lead a campaign to raise awareness of the unique selling points of the wide range of South African fruits on offer," he added.

The delegation is visiting other destinations in Asia this week to discuss progress with improving access for Southern African fruit.

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