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Most South African lemon exporters veer clear of Europe

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May 27th, 2014

South African lemon growers continue to give the European market a wide berth due to concerns over potential citrus black spot (CBS) inspections, with less than 10% of exports going to the old continent so far this season.

According to a report from the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) of Southern Africa, shippers have reported unfulfilled lemon demand in European markets with escalating prices.

In a report for the season to week 21, CGA figures show exporters of other citrus fruits have been sending more significant portions of their crop to the European Union.

The greatest of these has been easy peelers, with around half of the 2.3 million cartons in shipments going to the U.K. and 24% sent to northern Europe.

The report highlighted that Satsumas were "over" and Clementines were now in full swing with one million cartons packed and passed for export.

Just under half the country's grapefruit and around 18% of its Navel oranges have been exported to the EU as well.

"Grapefruit packing is at full tilt – with almost a third now packed. Northern Europe has taken the bulk of this product – but Japan will start to increase after the first two ships were despatched last week," the report said.

"Navel export volumes are still negligible – although packing is starting to gain momentum."

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Caution the order of the day for South African citrus exporters

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