South Africa gains new cold treatment options for citrus exports to India

After nearly a decade of negotiations, newly approved export conditions for citrus to India have been established. India has approved the inclusion of additional treatment options for fresh citrus fruit from South Africa. The improved export conditions are a significant development for the industry.

South Africa already exports citrus to India with various treatments for fruit flies. The additional fruit fly cold treatment options that have now been approved will allow for the quality of the fruit in the market to improve, and it adds important logistical flexibility.

The Minister of Agriculture, Willie Aucamp, has welcomed the development: "This is not only good news, but also indicates how advanced technology enables our farmers to push barriers to have other countries enjoy our high-quality produce."

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With a population of approximately 1.47 billion and one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, India represents significant potential for South African citrus. Despite this, India's share of exports from South Africa is very small and thus presents an exceptional opportunity for growth.

India is itself one of the world's largest citrus producers, with consumers already familiar with the product category. South Africa's counter-seasonal production provides an opportunity to complement domestic supply, particularly as the middle class expands, health-conscious consumption grows and demand for mandarin-type citrus increases.

"Special recognition is given to the Department of Agriculture and Citrus Research International for their continued technical engagement with Indian authorities that have made the new treatment options possible. This demonstrates the importance of sustained public-private partnership in improving technical conditions for accessing markets," said Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA).

He also emphasised that attention should now shift towards improving the commercial conditions under which South African citrus enters the Indian market. Most-Favoured-Nation tariffs of approximately 25-30% continue to place South African citrus at a disadvantage compared with Southern Hemisphere competitors benefiting from preferential tariff arrangements.

"We look forward to working with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition on the critical task of addressing these tariff barriers and improving the competitiveness of South African citrus in the Indian market going forward," said Ntshabele.

With positive developments in the SACU–India Preferential Trade Agreement process, continued momentum towards improved preferential access will help unlock India's great market potential and support the long-term sustainability and diversification of the South African citrus industry. The CGA sees combining improved phytosanitary market access with more competitive tariff conditions as being key to growing South Africa's presence in India and supporting the long-term sustainability, growth and diversification of the South African citrus industry.

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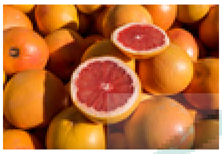

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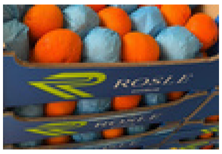

- ## "The demand has been encouraging, supported by the fruit’s eating quality"

- ## The EU imported a record 1.57 million tons of citrus fruit this season