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New export conditions set to boost South African citrus shipments to India

After almost a decade of negotiations, India approved new export conditions for South African citrus, incorporating additional fruit fly cold treatment options.

According to a joint statement by the [Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA)] and the Department of Agriculture of South Africa, the measure represents a significant advancement for the industry, as it will allow for improved quality of fruit sold in India and provide greater logistical flexibility to exporters.

Image by CGA

India offers growth opportunities

With a population close to 1.47 billion and one of the largest and fastest-growing economies globally, India represents a market with significant potential for the South African fruit.

The Asian country currently holds a small share of South Africa's citrus exports, so there is ample potential for growth.

Furthermore, India is one of the world's leading citrus producers and has consumers familiar with the category. South African fruit, on the other hand, is counterseasonal, complementing the local supply.

Image by CGA

The expansion of the middle class, a greater concern for health and wellness, and the increasing demand for mandarin-type fruit also represent opportunities for South African exporters.

The CEO of the CGA, Boitshoko Ntshabele, celebrated the role of the Department of Agriculture and Citrus Research International in advancing technical talks with Indian authorities.

He noted that the process is evidence of the importance of the collaboration between government and the private sector in improving technical conditions for market access.

Tariffs remain a challenge

The CGA pointed out that the next focus must be on improving commercial conditions for South African citrus in India.

Currently, tariffs under the Most Favored Nation (MFN) principle are approximately between 25 percent and 30 percent, creating a disadvantage compared to southern hemisphere competitors with preferential tariff agreements.

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

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