South African citrus export estimate cut to 197.9 million cartons

The Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) has lowered its South African citrus export estimate for the 2026 season from 209.4 million 15kg cartons in April to 197.9 million cartons. The revised estimate is below the final 2025 export volume of 204 million cartons.

The adjustment follows a season affected by several factors. Trade routes to Middle Eastern markets, which normally absorb about 20% of the crop, were disrupted by war. Rainfall affected Limpopo and Mpumalanga early in the season, while flooding in the Western and Eastern Cape destroyed some orchards.

Port bottlenecks, higher shipping and input costs, and reduced buying power in export markets have added pressure. The European orange marketing window has also narrowed, with a large Egyptian crop at the start of the season followed by an earlier European crop due to weather conditions.

The CGA identified export market diversification as one area requiring further attention. Opening new markets or improving existing access involves technical negotiations, government processes, phytosanitary protocols, and tariff arrangements. The association identified the EU, U.S., China, India, and Japan among markets where protocols or tariff regimes could improve access for South African citrus.

Logistics was identified as another constraint. Port congestion and limited use of the country's rail network are adding to supply-chain pressure. The CGA views increased private-sector participation at ports and within the rail system as part of longer-term logistics reform, while noting that implementation will require an adjustment period.

Despite the lower 2026 estimate, the association maintains that South Africa's counter-seasonal supply position remains unchanged. It considers additional market access and improvements to port and rail logistics as priorities for supporting future citrus exports.
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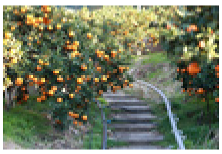

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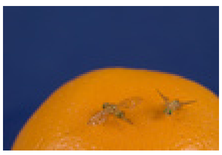

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