

Fewer mandarins due to drought in the Western Cape

South Africa expects good citrus season

The drought in the Western Cape has contributed somewhat to South Africa's production figures. For most products, the negative effect of the drought has been negated by larger cultivation acres. This means a good 2017/2018 market is expected for oranges, grapefruit and lemons. Mandarins are the only fruit that's acreage expansion cannot compensate for the effects of the drought in the Western Cape. This is according to a recent USDA report.

Grapefruit production for the 2017/2018 market year is estimated to be 9% higher at a volume of 400 000 tonnes. This is thanks to the larger acreage and the normal weather conditions in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, the most important cultivation areas. These two regions are good for 81% of the country's grapefruit production. In 2017/2018, exports are expected to be 8% higher at 250 000 tonnes.



For oranges, there is talk of a 2% increase. This brings the 2017/2018 volume to 1,43 million tonnes. This is thanks to normal rainfall and the absence of hail, in combination with a larger acreage in the most important cultivation areas of Limpopo, the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. These areas account for 82% of production. Exports are expected to be a percent higher at 1,18 million tonnes. This growth is possible thanks to the available volume and the efforts to quash the uncertainties around CBS in the EU markets.

Mandarin production is 9% lower at 230 000 tonnes in the 2017/2018 market year. The drought in the Western Cape is the most important factor for this shrinkage. Its negative effect is partially offset by the increased acreage in other regions, such as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. As a result of this decreased production, exports are also lower. It is thought that there will be an estimated 15% lower export volume. This amounts to 180 000 tonnes.

Things look positive for lemons and limes. This product group has shown a growth of 6%. This means the estimated volume for the 2017/2018 market year is 420 000 tonnes. The acreage in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, the most important cultivation regions, is the most significant factor for this increase. Normal weather conditions have also contributed to the good harvest. The Eastern Cape and Limpopo account for about 80% of production. The drought in the Western Cape means the growth in other regions is partially invalidated in the total figures. The Western Cape region is good for 10% of the total volume.

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