

## South Africa eyes Asian markets as oranges gain access to Vietnam

By Sebastian Ramírez

The South African citrus export season will kick off in April with Vietnam as the newest destination for oranges.



A bilateral agreement established with the Vietnamese government was announced by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in collaboration with the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (CGA) before the start of the season.

Paul Hardman, COO of the CGA, told [FreshFruitPortal.com](https://www.freshfruitportal.com) that the opening of this market offers an export potential of 15,000 tons of oranges.

In total, South Africa cultivates about 75,000 acres of Valencias and around 37,000 acres of Navel oranges.

“This will translate into more job opportunities and re-introduce the Vietnamese consumer to our high-quality oranges,” Hardman said. “The South African citrus industry is growing at an impressive rate and the Vietnamese market will absorb some of this growth.”

South Africa’s citrus season starts in April, but exports start picking up in May. That’s when the industry expects to start “sizable” shipments to Vietnam.

“We will be exporting Navels first and then Valencias when they come in later in the season,” Hardman said.

## Potential for further expansion

Hardman says they see a lot of potential in the Vietnam market and, now that oranges are approved for entry, applications for mandarins, grapefruit, and lemons will follow.

“The Asian market holds potential in general,” Hardman said. “Mainly because of the growing economies, large populations, the value placed on imported fruit, diets rich in fruit, and their quality preference.”

He says that large retailers in the country have opened thousands of small convenience stores, which they now can stock with good quality citrus.

South Africa is one of the top exporters of citrus in the world, accounting for 11.7% of the total share of exports in 2022 with a value of \$1.72 billion, according to FAOSTAT.

The main destinations of citrus exports from South Africa are the Netherlands with a value of \$343 million, followed by the United Kingdom with \$154M, Russia with \$138M, the United Arab Emirates with \$137M, and China with a total value of \$134M.

Hardman said they are currently working hard to expand trade to India. He also sees promise in Thailand and South Korea.

