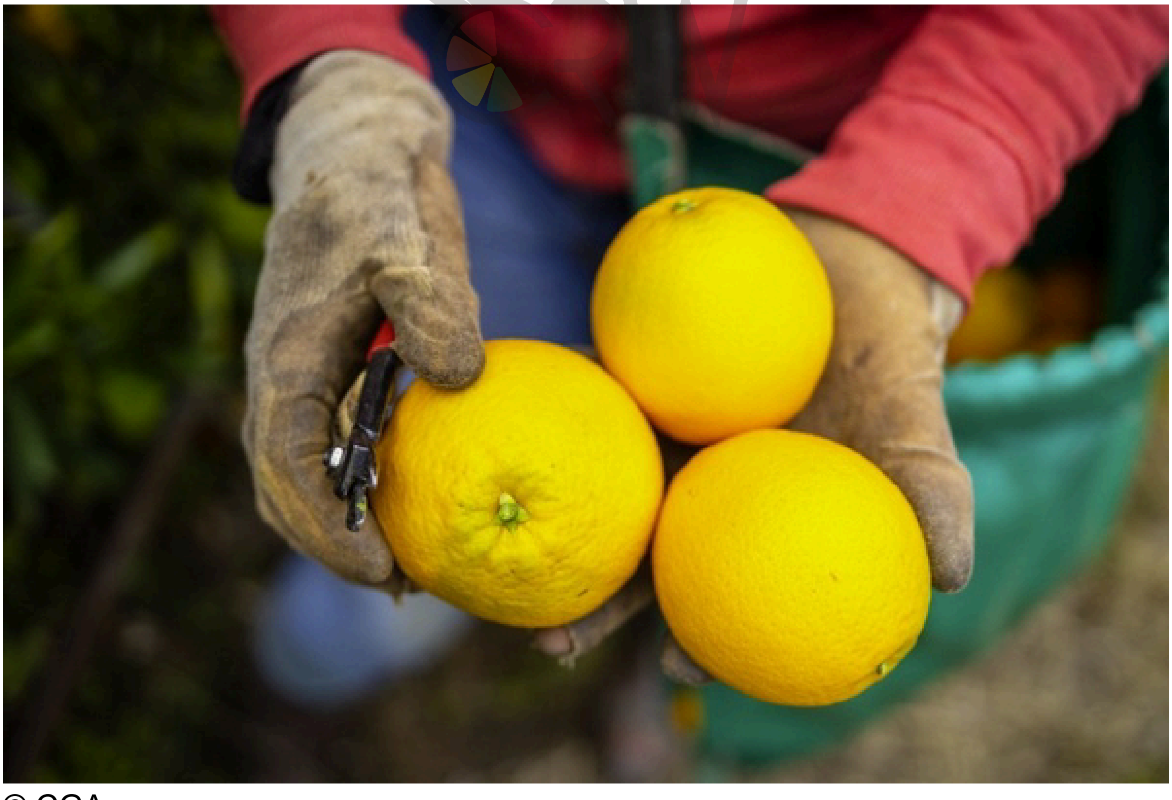
South Africa cuts 2026 citrus export estimate to 205.3 million cartons

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has revised its 2026 total export estimate downward following meetings of its variety focus groups. The original estimate was 209.4 million 15kg cartons, while the latest estimate is 205.3 million 15kg cartons. Adjustments vary by variety as the season has progressed.

The Mandarin estimate has been reduced by 2.7 million 15kg cartons. Nova and Leanri harvesting has been completed, with regions still packing focused on late Mandarin types, including Orri, Nadorcott, and Tango.

The Navel orange estimate is down by 4.6 million 15kg cartons from the March 2026 estimate. Larger fruit sizes have been reported in the Eastern Cape following increased rainfall. About 75% of the Navel crop has been packed, with less than 6 million cartons of Late Navels remaining.



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Valencia orange estimates have seen only marginal adjustments. Yields per hectare have been strong in northern regions, offset by lower production in the Eastern and Western Cape. Orange juice factories are processing considerable volumes, while Valencia packing is expected to peak over the next two to three weeks. The season could be longer than usual.

The Grapefruit estimate has been reduced by 1.7 million 15kg cartons. Northern regions have completed packing, while the Oranje Rivier and KZN areas are nearing completion. Class 1 and 2 year-to-date volumes are lower than in previous years, while volumes destined for processing are higher.

The Lemon estimate has increased by 5.4 million cartons from the original forecast. Most regions have completed the season, while some packhouses in the Eastern Cape have less than 10% of volumes remaining.

Across all varieties, the citrus industry has reached peak export volumes, placing pressure on port capacity and causing delays at the Port of Durban.

Flooding in the Western and Eastern Cape, particularly in Patensie, has affected growers. Input costs, market conditions, and pricing are also putting pressure on farm-gate margins.

The conflict in the Middle East continues to affect exports, with the region traditionally receiving approximately 20% of South Africa's exports. Shipping rates, diesel costs, and transit times have also been affected. Potential conflict-related disruption in the Red Sea and at the Port of Jeddah remains a concern.

The CGA is reiterating the need for quality discipline across the value chain to ensure fruit reaches the appropriate market in the required condition.

For more information:

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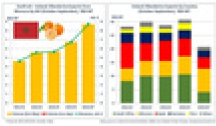
- 

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