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CGA updates citrus export residue rules

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Southern African citrus growers are being urged to follow updated plant-protection product restrictions to ensure fruit meets changing residue limits in key export markets. Source: Western Cape Government

Southern African citrus growers have been advised to follow revised plant-protection product restrictions to ensure fruit complies with residue limits in destination markets.

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) and Citrus Research International published the updated guidance this month.

The restrictions apply in addition to South African product-registration and label requirements. Following the label instructions alone would, in many cases, not be sufficient to comply with importing countries' maximum residue limits, the organisations warned.

The guidance covers pre-harvest intervals and restrictions for citrus destined for the European Union, US, Canada, Japan, China, South Korea and several other markets.

A pre-harvest interval is the minimum period required between the application of a plant-protection product and the harvesting of the crop.

The latest edition incorporates a lower EU residue limit for ethephon that took effect on August 19.

The EU has also published a limit of 0.01 milligrams per kilogram for benomyl, carbendazim and thiophanate-methyl, which will apply to all citrus types from January 29, next year. However, these substances are no longer registered for use on citrus in South Africa.

Further EU limits affecting fenpropathrin and cyhexatin have been proposed but have not yet been adopted. If approved, they are expected to take effect by September 2027.

Other changes include a 14-day pre-harvest interval for acequinocyl on citrus destined for China and new restrictions on cyantraniliprole for Taiwan.

Cypermethrin is no longer permitted on citrus exported to Ukraine, while new restrictions apply to dodine and malathion for that market.

The US residue limit for clothianidin is due to expire on December 31.

Growers have been advised to maintain accurate spray records for at least three years so that the cause can be investigated if residue limits are exceeded.

Special care is also required for lemons because their multiple fruit-set pattern creates a risk that treatments applied to later crops could leave unacceptable residues on older fruit remaining on the trees.

The CGA and Citrus Research International warned that compliance with the recommendations could not provide an absolute guarantee that export residue limits would not be exceeded.

Growers would also need to consider product efficacy, resistance management and compatibility with integrated pest-management practices.

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