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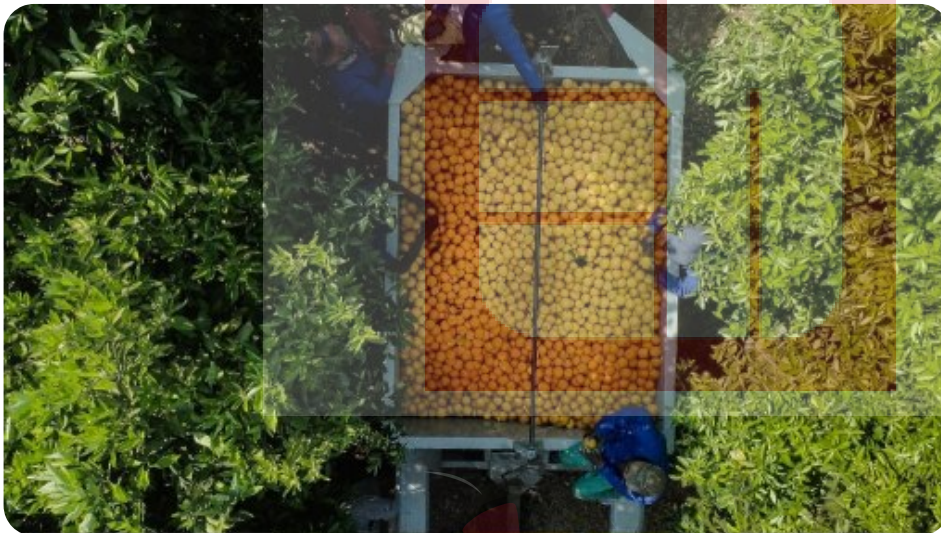
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## CGA lowers orange export expectation on back of floods, war impacts

24TH AUGUST 2026 BY: MARLENY ARNOLDI - ONLINE NEWS EDITOR



**I**ndustry body Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) says the 2026 citrus season has become a

uniquely challenging one for Southern African citrus growers.

After a recent meeting of the orange variety focus group, the export estimates for Valencia and Navel Oranges have been lowered to 58-million 15 kg cartons and 24.3-million 15 kg cartons, respectively, which marks a reduction of about 8% and 19% from the opening season estimates, respectively.

Members of the focus group noted that further reductions to the export estimate will be made if current market conditions do not

hold.

The total export estimate for the citrus season across all varieties now stands at 197.9–million 15 kg cartons.

In April the original estimate for the season was 209.4–million 15 kg cartons.

"In a typical year, growers contend with one or two risk factors. However, this year nearly every element of the risk framework materialised negatively in some form. These include geopolitical shocks, severe weather events, disrupted market supply and demand patterns, exchange rate risk, as well as shipping and logistics challenges," says CGA CEO Dr **Boitshoko Ntshabele**.

CGA explains the conflict in the Middle East is having a significant impact on the industry, with the US-Israeli war on Iran having closed off routes to markets that would ordinarily have absorbed a large share of citrus. South Africa usually exports around 20% of its crop to the Middle East. Apart from this redirection affecting prices in markets, the war's economic repercussions have also led to a decline in global purchasing power this season, especially in middle class households.

Simultaneously, the conflict disrupted the supply of empty containers, causing port congestion and driving up shipping and logistics costs, placing financial strain on growers.

"South Africa's production volume this season remained consistent with the industry's long-term trajectory, as articulated in our Vision 260 strategy. And, although it cannot in itself account for all the disruptions experienced, it remains a significant volume of fruit that needs to pass efficiently through our ports, onto

vessels and ultimately into markets within a distinct supply window.

"The war redirected fruit away from some of its usual destinations and into a narrower set of markets. We also saw a longer tail to the northern hemisphere supply, causing our early arrivals to overlap to a greater extent than usual and leading to early saturation in some markets," explains CGA chairperson **Gerrit van der Merwe**.

Early in the season, severe rainfall in Limpopo and Mpumalanga was problematic. It was followed by disastrous flooding in the Western and the Eastern Cape. Some orchards in the Eastern Cape were completely destroyed. This not only contributed to the decrease of export estimates throughout the season, but unfortunately also negatively affected the arrival quality of fruit in certain instances.

However, South Africa's quality assurance measures and its phytosanitary systems exist precisely to manage this risk, fruit by fruit and shipment by shipment.

"Founded on our growers' continued investment in scientific research, South Africa has world-class pest, disease and quality management protocols for both in-orchard and post-harvest treatments to help ensure that our fruit not only maintains its reputation for premium quality, but also meets all global phytosanitary requirements under the most strenuous of conditions," Ntshabele states.

CGA is actively engaged in supporting and enabling the flow of fruit to where it will benefit growers most this season. This includes supplying market intelligence and the timely sharing of critical information through stakeholder engagement platforms.

CGA's Middle East Crisis Committee, in particular, has done highly valuable work over the past months. The industry is currently focused on making sure fruit reaches markets in a predictable and disciplined manner and recently called on all growers and exporters to ensure that they direct the right fruit to the right markets in order to protect at all times South Africa's reputation as a responsible supplier of premium quality citrus.

"Yes, 2026 is tough, but South African citrus growers have proven their resilience many times before, having weathered remarkable challenges over the years. The industry remains on a sound trajectory, and an unusually challenging season does not change a fundamental truth: sustainable growth in exports and export markets can boost job creation and economically uplift rural communities across the country," Ntshabele affirms.

The difficult season, however, does sharpen focus on the need to act decisively on those factors within the industry's and government's control, to ensure the continued growth of the agricultural export economy. Two priorities stand out: improving market access for our growers, and more efficient port and rail logistics.

Progress on these two fronts alone would go a long way towards bolstering the future of an industry that, while under pressure currently, remains fundamentally strong, CGA concludes.



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