

South African citrus exports revised down yet again

It has been a tough season for South African citrus growers.



For [the second time this year](#), the industry has revised its export projections down, going from 209.4 million 15kg boxes at the beginning of the campaign to 196.5 million.

The new forecast reflects an overall six percent decrease from the sector's [original expectations](#).



Image courtesy of CGA

South African citrus forecast breakdown

All citrus categories in the CGA's latest projection are down with the exception of lemons. Shipments for the latter were estimated at nearly 46 million 15 kg boxes at the beginning of the season, but the latest estimate shows a boost of only 9.3 percent to reach over 50 million boxes.

On the other hand, the biggest dip was for navels, with shipments going from 30 million boxes to 24.3 million boxes, down a whopping 19 percent from the first projection. Grapefruit exports are down nearly two million boxes, sitting at 16.1 million boxes after a 9.5 percent drop.



Meanwhile, mandarin projections are down 6.5 percent to 49.3 million boxes, and Valencia estimates decreased by eight percent to 56.6 million boxes.

The latter is in peak season, but was revised down a third time in early September due to what the industry body called an ["unusual season."](#)

A perfect storm

Released at the beginning of August, the last revision cited natural adjustments made by growers as the season progressed. However, this time, Boitshoko Ntshabele, CEO of South Africa's Citrus Growers Association (CGA), said the update is explained by a perfect storm of external factors.

"This year, nearly every element of the risk framework materialized at once," he [wrote at the end of August](#).

For starters, there's major logistical and economic disruption from the war in Iran, which has increased costs and, above all, closed off access to the Middle East, one of the biggest buyers of South African citrus, with a 20 percent market share.

The industry was also hit with severe [rain and flooding events](#) on two separate occasions at the beginning of the year, which, according to the CGA executive, [destroyed some orchards](#).



Additionally, Ntshabele cited continued port disruptions and bottlenecks, as well as “moribund markets”—key destinations where consumers’ purchasing power has notoriously decreased in the past year.

“It has been a challenging season,” he wrote. “Nevertheless, growers continue to show the resilience that has become synonymous with our industry.”

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