



Missed opportunities for lemons

No oversupply of South African Satsumas



The first Satsumas are being harvested in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, but volumes from the north of the country appear to have been reduced by the high amounts of rainfall this summer, resulting in puffy and oversized fruit in some blocks.

“It looks like there’s a good pull for Satsumas with Spain and Morocco being short on supply, and with the rain South African product will be reduced, which creates an outlook that we cautiously expect to be positive,” says a citrus trader.

“These days there are no more high prices, but I think the Satsuma season could be okay. At least there’s no oversupply.”

Shipping and productivity at South African ports remain a cause for concern, but the market outlook for Satsumas is an improvement on that of twelve months ago, he adds.

Lemons



The lemon harvest started very early, around three to four weeks earlier than last year.

Before the heavy rains large volumes were already packed, which explains why South African lemon exports are thus far over 200,000 15kg cartons ahead of lemon exports as it stood last year by the end of week 9.

Exporters lost their lead through the heavy rains of the summer and lemons' high risk of oleocellosis and by now, they say they're around four weeks behind schedule.

"It's been very problematic, falling behind in our lemon campaign. There has now been an unfulfilled demand for lemons which is a missed opportunity."

By the end of week 9, South Africa has shipped 814,476 15kg cartons of lemons, 49% of that to the Middle East (slightly more than last year this time), 22% to South East Asia (also an increase on last year's first phase lemon season) but less to Russia (18%) and Canada (7%) than last year's figures by this time.

Exports of seedless lemons have started to the Middle East, Nigeria and Russia.

The citrus export estimates are expected to be released by the Citrus Growers Association towards the end of next week.

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Author: Carolize Jansen

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