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CGA says there is no 'greening' disease threat for South African citrus

7TH OCTOBER 2024 BY: MARLENY ARNOLDI - DEPUTY EDITOR ONLINE



Photo by: Bloomberg

The
Citrus
Growers'
Association of
Southern
Africa (CGA)
has dispelled
media reports
claiming the
citrus industry

and European trade are being threatened by a new greening disease.

The disease referred to by media reports, African Citrus Greening (ACG), is under official control in South Africa through the prevention of movement of propagation material from greening areas to greening-free areas, CGA explains.

It adds that ACG is not a threat to the future of the South African citrus industry and that growers continue to implement

stringent phytosanitary measures to safeguard produce against disease and pests.

Notably, the disease cannot spread by fruit or seed; therefore, any suggestions that export citrus can spread this disease are incorrect.

Some media outlets are incorrectly reporting that South Africa "faces a new disease threat" in the form of "the African strain of the citrus-greening disease". This also incorrectly conflates two diseases.

Huanglongbing or Asian Citrus Greening, and sometimes referred to as Yellow Dragon, is a feared citrus disease and has caused devastation in some citrus-producing regions throughout the world. This disease is not present in South Africa, CGA emphasises.

ACG, on the other hand, has been reported in South Africa since 1932 and has been managed with great success since then. The disease was most recently detected in October 2023 near Gqeberha, in the Eastern Cape, in an area where it has not been detected before.

ACG is caused by an entirely different species of bacteria, spread by an entirely different vector and it is a citrus disease that is not nearly as dangerous as Yellow Dragon.

The detection of ACG in Gqeberha simply required further control measures, such as control of the insect vector and infected plant material, to continue the successful prevention of the spread to commercial citrus production areas, CGA points out.

To link ACG in any way with current cases at the World Trade Organisation on unnecessary and trade-restrictive Citrus Black Spot and False Codling Moth measures, is inappropriate, CGA states, adding that these cases are in no way related to ACG. 🇿🇦

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