

South Africa's weather and logistics issues drive citrus export decline in 2024

The 2024 citrus export campaign from the southern hemisphere did not align with previous growth trends, largely due to South Africa's performance. As the primary exporter, contributing two-thirds of the total citrus exports (2.23 million tons), South Africa faced several challenges. Traditionally a leader in oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, and lemons, the country's growth potential remains untapped as some areas have yet to reach full production.

This season, initial export expectations were unmet due to weather, logistics, market, and cost issues. South Africa experienced diverse weather conditions, including heat, frosts, droughts, floods, and strong winds. Logistical difficulties in transporting citrus to ports and fulfilling increased phytosanitary demands in the European Union further complicated exports. The Asian market's demand was lower than anticipated, and the U.S. remains a minor destination due to stringent protocols. Additionally, attractive prices from the orange juice industry diverted some export volumes to processing.

Other southern hemisphere exporters showed stability. Chile, the second-largest exporter, faced an uneven situation, with a 21% decrease in mandarin, clementine, and late variety exports due to unfavorable weather, totaling 183,000 tons. However, lemon and orange exports increased. Peru, ranking third, set export records, particularly with tangerines, reaching 219,000 tons. Argentina, the fourth exporter, continues to struggle with a lemon oversupply, leading to reduced fresh exports, while sweet citrus exports increased but did not offset lemon declines.

Australia's sweet citrus exports to Asia, ranging between 200,000-250,000 tons, were also affected by climatic challenges, resulting in decreased export volumes.

Source: TopInfo (<https://www.topinfo.com.ar/en/2025/01/06/citricos-2024-temporada-austral-no-cumplio/>)

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