

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

"Instead of worrying about what you cannot control, shift your energy to what you can create."
(Roy T. Bennett)

US TARIFFS

The morning of Friday the 24th of July 2026 saw the Trump administration install tariffs on 60 countries, ostensibly in relation to issues concerning trade relations with countries who practice forced labour. These are referred to as "Section 301" tariffs. We understand that goods loaded on vessels before 24 July and arrived in the US before the 28th are exempt.

This tariff decision followed investigations by the US Trade Representative over the last four months. Several countries were hit with 10% tariffs, whilst others, including South Africa, were set on a 12,5% tariff. The investigations preceding the announcement saw various organisation making input, and some even attended physical sessions in April, as well as a follow-up round in early July.

My take is that these tariffs are now final, and unlike 'liberation day tariffs' which were ruled to have been noncompliant with statutes in February of this year, would remain in place at least up to the end of this administration, unless ended by some legal outcome. One also has a sense that a reduction for South Africa of the current rate to a lower 10% is possible if a SA-US trade deal realises. For our citrus exports, oranges remain excluded, but lemons, mandarins and grapefruit are subject to the tariff. Importantly, our competitors in that market are also sitting with a 12,5% tariff.

We have contacted the Department of Trade Industry and Competition (DTIC) and made a call to expedite negotiations towards the conclusion of a deal with their US counterparts. There is a glimmer of hope for such an eventuality.

As the CGA, we met the recently appointed Ambassador to the US, Roelf Meyer, and we are hopeful, on the back of recent media reports, that we will see some semblance of normalisation between the two nations. We have also previously pointed out that the appointment of Deputy Minister Steenhuisen to the DTIC has the potential for a positive outcome in terms of market access. He has previously made successful inroads on technical market access at the Department of Agriculture and could assist significantly in dealing with tariff-related issues which continue to block true growth in our sector. The US market is accessed by the Western and Northern Cape growers only, and there is an opportunity to finally expand not only US access, but access in other key markets as well.

We are now at the peak of the export season. It's fair to say growers have been tested from every direction this year. Between one curveball and the next, it's starting to feel like a season many would rather forget - and what is in effect an addition of a 2.5% tariff on mandarin, lemon and grapefruit exports to the US only adds to the list. We will keep working through it with you, as we always do.

ORANGE HEART

Growers with fruit to donate, whether on the farm or at the port, are warmly invited to join the Orange Heart fruit drive. To take part, contact Sive Silo at sive@citrusacademy.org.za or 079 317 6286.

PACKED AND SHIPPED VOLUMES

End of week 30 million 15 kg cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed	Vision 260
SOURCE: PPECB / AGRIHUB	2024	2025	2026	2025	2026	2026	2026	2025	2026
*Grapefruit	13.2 m	13.7 m	14 m	13 m	13 m	17.8 m	16.1 m	15.3 m	15.5 m
Lemons	30.7 m	35.5 m	46.7 m	33.3 m	42.9 m	45.9 m	51.3 m	41.6 m	43.4 m
Mandarins	28.3 m	33.5 m	32.7 m	26.9 m	26.8 m	52.7 m	50 m	53.5 m	50 m
Navels	18 m	23.7 m	18.1 m	20.2 m	15.9 m	30 m	25.4 m	31.6 m	32.3 m
Valencia	15.5 m	20.9 m	17.4 m	13.4 m	12 m	63 m	62.5 m	62 m	67.8 m
Total	105.7 m	127.3 m	128.9 m	106.8 m	110.6 m	209.4 m	205.3 m	204 m	209 m

*Grapefruit Packed Distribution: Class 1 & 2 volumes remained relatively stable at 11.2 m cartons (2026) vs 12.1 m (2025) and 11.8 m (2024), while PP volumes increased to 2.8 m cartons from 1.6 m (2025) and 1.4 m (2024).

INTERESTING FACTS

When lemon juice rations were introduced in the late 18th century, naval mortality from scurvy dropped sharply.

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