


The Citrus Growers Association Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has announced its latest citrus harvest volumes, with the Russian market taking a good chunk of the country's exports. 

CEO Justin Chadwick says the industry has packed 14.3 million 15kg (33lbs) cartons of citrus fruit and shipped 10.1 million cartons.

"Clementine harvesting has now passed the 1 million carton mark - the latest prediction is 2.5 million cartons," he says.

"Navel packing is starting to gain momentum with 2.6 million cartons packed to date - 1.2 million in the past week. Russia has once again proven to have a liking for southern African citrus with 35% of oranges, 26% of lemons, 19% of soft citrus and 16% of grapefruit shipped there to date.

"The navel and Valencia focus groups met over the past week, and both adjusted their predicted volumes slightly downwards. In terms of total citrus volumes the latest prediction is 500 000 cartons less than the original March estimate."

Chadwick adds the Citrus Marketing Forum will take place on June 22 in the Willow Park Conference Centre, addressing issues including weather, quality and transport.

"Rainfall at a critical time for satsumas influenced fruit development. A second item is transport and the poor load configuration on trucks, leading to collapsed pallets and collapsed cartons," he says.

"There are solutions and these need to be implemented to prevent this in the future, it just does not make sense to invest so much in production and packing only to have the load destroyed on its way down to Durban.

"A third item is to look at the original crop estimate, and subsequent predictions to plan out the balance of the season. In particular fruit sizing is of interest as this will impact the global distribution pattern of exports. The Japan Focus Group in particular is interested in the size distribution for grapefruit for the rest of the season."

CGA growers are based in 18 regions in Africa, covering South Africa, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

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