



South African orange exporters have had an "interesting" season this year due to a larger Egyptian crop, according to the chief of the Eastern Cape-based [Sundays River Citrus Company](#).

Managing director Hannes de Waal said the north African country's greater volumes meant it was lingering in markets for longer than normal.

"We have an interesting orange season. Egypt is longer in the market, and it's definitely been a little bit difficult," he said.

He explained the situation had led to a lower sales rate than usual.

"It will obviously create problems going forward. It seemed to us [in early July] that the European market started lifting its head, but you see a market that is priced lower than last year at the same time."

He added that South Africa's Navel orange crop is closer to a normal level - having seen a decline last year.

It seems that Egyptian fruit volumes are now declining in Europe, according to the representative. But he said the big test would be in August when the European holiday season kicks in.

"If sales rates can be maintained in that period we'll be fine. But traditionally it's showed

that sales rate can be slower. That can make things a little bit tougher than what one is used to," he said.

He also explained that there was very little industry information available from Egypt on crop forecasts, in contrast to South African, Chile, and Argentina.

"One has no idea what Egypt is up to. They don't publish information," De Waal said.

"We've always known that Egypt would grow aggressively, and I think their game is getting up to standard. A couple of years ago they had problems with MRLs in Europe, but now I don't think that's the case. Their quality is on par with anybody else in the world. They're obviously a formidable producer.

"If this is an indication of things to come, it's definitely going to impact the global orange supply."

### **Positive lemon season**

For lemons, De Waal said the campaign has been going positively. This is in spite of global market prices not being as high as they once were.

At present, he said lemon supplies available on the global market may be slightly lower than last year. He partly attributed this to Argentina, where rainfall has affected production and led to lower exports than forecast.

"We're quite satisfied. Our importers are telling us that they're getting good sales rates. In Europe we're very happy," he said.

There has been impressive growth in particular in the low-residue category, he said.

### **U.S. could be good late Navel orange market**

Asked about his expectations for the U.S. market, where the Sundays River Citrus Company may soon be able to export, De Waal was upbeat about the future prospects.

While at present only growers in the Western and Northern Cape are eligible to ship to the market, U.S. authorities look set to publish a final rule [allowing for the importation](#) of several citrus varieties and hybrids into the continental U.S. from areas of South Africa where citrus black spot (CBS) has been known to occur.

The final rule is expected to become effective in September, South Africa's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) said in June.

"It could be an important market ... we are very positive about that development" De Waal said.

He said the Sundays River area would be able to service the U.S. market well. Late Navels, Nardocotts and ClemenGolds are among the products that would likely be targeted toward the U.S.

The shipping temperature U.S. authorities currently require for lemons would make it difficult to ship that fruit, he said, but he pointed out that both countries had the "same attitude" to false codling moth.

"So I expect that in time that will be lifted and it will be a good lemon market for us as well," he said.