

South Africa's Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) says it is expecting a 4 percent increase in exports of lemons, Navels, Valencias, and grapefruit this year.

The soft citrus forecast is not yet available.

For lemons, the current prediction is that 32.3 million (15kg) cartons will be exported to key markets, which is an increase of 1.3 million cartons when compared to 2021.

"Young trees beginning to bear fruit in some regions including the Western Cape and Senwes in Limpopo will contribute to this growth. However, a cooler summer could result in smaller fruit in some regions, which could impact the final number of cartons packed and shipped," CGA CEO Justin Chadwick said in a weekly newsletter.

In the orange category, both Navels and Valencias are expected to see larger volumes.

For Navels, current predictions show a 1.5 million increase in (15kg) cartons that will be shipped during the coming season, with 28.7 million cartons expected to be exported in total.

While hailstorms in some areas such as the Eastern Cape Midlands resulted in a decrease in predicted estimates, good rains in other areas such as the Sundays River Valley means this region should enjoy a 9 percent growth in navel export volumes, Chadwick said.

Meanwhile, an estimated 58.2 million (15kg) cartons of valencias is predicted to be exported in 2022, which will be a 3.2 million increase from the 55 million cartons shipped last season.

However, the final number shipped could decrease depending on market conditions towards the end of the season, in particular narrowing market windows which could make it difficult to ship remaining volumes, Chadwick said.

For grapefruit, an estimated 14.8 million (17kg) cartons are predicted to be exported during the upcoming season.

However, a number of outside forces could negatively impact this total including the Russian conflict in Ukraine due to Russia being a major importer of South African grapefruit.

"It is clear that, in order for the industry to continue on the upward trajectory it has enjoyed over the past few years, government and stakeholders across the value chain need to work together to improve the operational capacity and efficiency at the country's ports and to

secure, maintain, and retain as many market access opportunities as possible," he said.

The representative also said that there are several challenges facing the sector this season, including soaring input costs, red tape hampering access to some overseas markets, as well as ongoing operational challenges at the country's ports.