



SOUTH AFRICAN FRUIT TRADE FLOW

Issue No. 47 | September 2022

This report is released on a quarterly basis by the Trade Unit of the Markets and Economic Research Centre.

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SOUTH AFRICAN FRUIT TRADE FLOW

Issue No. 47: September 2022



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1. Background

South Africa's diverse weather and climatic conditions across provinces enable the country to cultivate and produce a variety of fruits, vegetables, and nuts for domestic and international markets. The country is known as a key producer and exporter of citrus, deciduous and subtropical fruits. This issue of the Fruit Trade Flow Report looks at citrus fruit and pome fruit. The report assesses the performance of these fruits in the current season and unpacks factors that allow South Africa to successfully supply both domestic and international markets. The emerging non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in export markets are identified and their impact on South Africa's fruit value chains is analysed. The report follows a trend analysis approach, comparing the 2021/2022 fruit season with the 2020/2021 season.

2. South Africa's pome fruit gets a breakthrough in the Indian market

Cindy Chokoe and Onele Tshitiza

The global production of apples for 2021/2022 is expected to increase by 1.0 million tonnes to a total of 81.6 million tonnes as China supplies improve and several European Union (EU) member states recover from the previous year's damaging weather (USDA,2022). India's apple production is anticipated to remain constant at 2.3 million tonnes although good growing conditions are expected to improve quality, while production in the EU is expected to improve slightly from 11.719 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 11.877 million tonnes in 2021/22 (USDA,2022). Production in several countries such as Iran, Russia, Brazil and Ukraine will remain unchanged, each expected to produce 2.241 million tonnes, 1.540 million tonnes, 1.223 million tonnes and 1.154 million tonnes, respectively.

Global exports of apples are projected at 6.554 million tonnes and imports at 6.322 million tonnes. Apples imported by India are projected to rise to 430 000 tonnes to support growing domestic consumption, with supplies mainly coming from Iran and Turkey. Russia's imports are expected to drop by 40% to 480 000 tonnes as imports from most countries have been lower in the current season, including the Southern Hemisphere (USDA, 2022).

The global pear production for 2021/2022 is expected to increase by 914 000 tonnes to 23.5 million tonnes as recovering supplies in China more than offset weather-related losses in the European Union. The EU's production of pears is expected to see a drop of 25% to reach 1.7 million tonnes largely due to severe snow, frost and cold temperatures on crops for countries such as France and Italy (FreshPlaza, 2022) Global exports and imports of pears are anticipated to decline to 1.7 million tonnes (-6%) and 1.6 million tonnes (-4%), respectively. Imports were affected by lower imports by Russia and Indonesia.

South Africa pome fruit production estimates

South Africa production is expected to rise for a fourth straight year to a record 1.16

million tonnes. Volumes are up as new trees are coming into production and sufficient water for irrigation combined with good growing conditions throughout the year, leading to higher output. Apples are the major deciduous fruit planted in South Africa and represent more than a third of the total deciduous fruit area. South Africa's apple production area in 2021-2022 is measured at 25 000 hectares, which is 1% above 2021. Moreover, **Figure 1** indicates that the South African pear production could increase by 7% to reach a record level of 510 000 tonnes in the 2021/22 season compared to 475 000 tonnes produced in 2020/21.

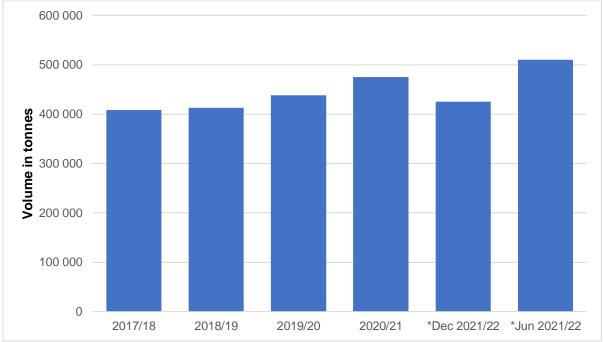


Figure 1: South Africa's pear production Source: USDA (2022) *Refers to an estimate

South African pome fruit export

South Africa is one of the major players in the global fruit arena. South Africa's exports of apples account for about 48% of total production while pears account for 50% of production. South Africa's pome fruit export estimate for the 2022 season compared to the exports of the previous year (2021) is illustrated in **Table 1**. South Africa's pome fruits exports are expected to perform well, with apples predicted to increase by 1% and pears by 13%, attributed to young orchards coming into production and favourable weather conditions (Hortgro, 2022). Exports of apples will increase from 44.7 million cartons to 45.4 million cartons (1 carton = 12.5kg), while pear exports will increase from 18.4 million cartons to 20.8 million cartons. Apple cultivars such as Bigbucks and Joya are expected to increase significantly, with 121% and 19% respectively, while pear cultivars such as Forelle volumes are estimated to return to a normal crop of about 4.4 mil cartons (1 carton = 12.5kg). Exports of apples to Far East and Asia had grown by 1.5 million cartons in week 39 of 2022, an 18% increase compared to the corresponding period in 2021, while to the Middle East, it had grown by 1.2 million cartons, an increase of 37%. This shows a growing demand in these regions.

In August, India approved in-transit cold treatment for SA pome fruit which would ensure quality fruit at arrival and shorter transit time. According to Hortgro (2022),

since the start of 2022, South Africa has exported more than 2.5 million cartons of apples and pears to India, and the demand is increasing each year. Although India is still a relatively small market for South Africa, it is expected that the sector will grow its footprint, given the high population of 1.4 billion people in India. The approval of the in-transit cold treatment was therefore welcomed as a breakthrough for South Africa pome industry.

Pome	2020	2021	2-year Average	2022 Estimate	2021 Inspections vs 2022 estimate	
Apples	36 713 573	44 739 753	40 726 663	45 401 454	661 701	1%
Pears	16 821 085	18 362 256	17 591 671	20 836 288	2 474 033	13%
Total	53 534 658	63 102 009	58 318 334	66 237 742	3 135 733	

Table 1: South African pome fruits export and estimate, week 39 (2022)

Source: Hortgro (2022)

Table 2 shows that the volumes of pear cultivars such as Packham's Triumph inspected YTD (year-to-date) of week 39 were unchanged compared to last season. Abate Fetel cultivar grew by 27%, while Doynne du Comice was 29% larger than the previous season.

Cultivars inspected YTD Week 39	2021	2022	Difference	
Packham's Triumph	7 092 478	7 084 694	-7 784	0%
Abate Fetel	3 168 315	4 038 594	870 279	27%
Doynne Du Comice	1 616 228	2 082 464	466 236	29%
Other Pears	5 226 807	6 637 766	1 410 959	27%
Total Inspections YTD	17 103 828	19 843 519	2 739 691	16%

Table 2: Cultivars inspected YTD Week 39 (2021 v 2022)

Source: Hortgro (2022)

Figure 2 shows the quantities and average prices of fresh apples sold at the National Fresh Produce Markets (NFPMs) from 2020 to 2022 (January-August). The total volumes sold in 2020 was 144 008.60 tonnes and 148 518.01 tonnes in 2021. It can be noted that the largest apples were sold in September and October of 2020 with volumes of 14 762.70 tonnes at R6 833.75/tonne and 14 794.20 tonnes at R7 515.32/tonne, respectively. The highest average price was noted in January of all the years, influenced by lower supplies in the markets.

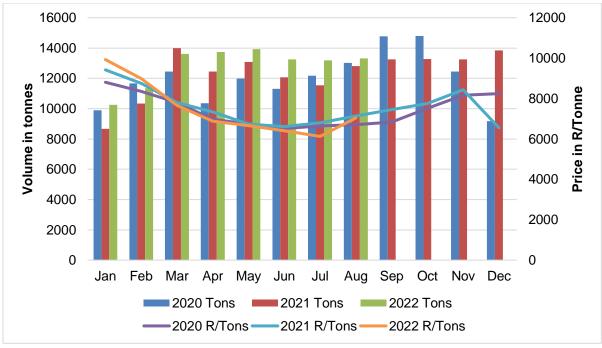


Figure 2: Sales of apples at NFPMs (2020-2022) Source: DALRRD (2022)

Figure 3 shows the volumes and average prices of pears sold at the NFPMs from 2020 to 2022 (January to August). The total quantities sold in 2020 was 43979,66 tonnes and 44821,16 tonnes in 2021. The largest volumes sold were in April 2022 with 5 453.77 tonnes at R5 271.34/tonne followed by August 2020 with 5 168.17 tonnes at R5 815.83/tonne.

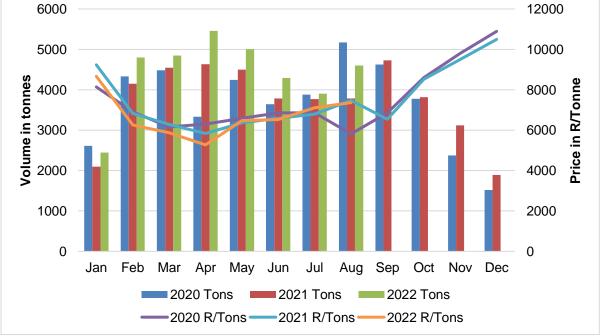


Figure 3: Sales of pears at NFPMs (2020-2022) Source: DALRRD (2022)

Conclusion

South Africa is expected to produce a record high pome fruit in marketing year of 2021/22 (USDA, 2022). The favourable weather conditions, new plantings, improved

cultivars, and increased irrigation on good winter rainfall positively contributed to the growth of pome production. Many producers have also invested in netting to help manage impacts of weather and pests, resulting in higher yields. However, rising shipping costs, an upsurge in input costs, local port inefficiencies and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on established trading patterns, are challenging South Africa's exports of pome fruit. To mitigate this risk, South Africa's pome exporters and producers can leverage the approval of in-transit cold treatment of pears from Indian government to expand in the Indian market.

3. An overview of South Africa's grapefruit and lemon production and exports in 2021/22 season.

By Khodani Madula and Onele Tshitiza

South Africa's citrus exports are expected to grow by 3% in 2022 and could reach 166.1 million cartons (a carton is equivalent to 15kg). This increase of almost 5 million cartons compared to 2021 confirms the strong development of the South African citrus industry exports, which have also grown by 29% from 2020 to 2022. This performance is driven by the continued growth of orchards in new areas and cultivation of better yielding and early maturing varieties.

3.1 Grapefruits

The global production of grapefruit from 2017 to 2021/22 is illustrated in **Figure 4**. The estimated production is up by 4% from 6.7 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 6.9 million tonnes in 202122, attributed to larger output in China due to favourable weather and increased area planted (USDA, 2022). China is the leading producer, expected to produce 5.2 million tonnes of grapefruit, followed by Mexico at 534 000 tonnes, South Africa (380 000 tonnes) and the United States of America (USA) (336 000 tonnes).

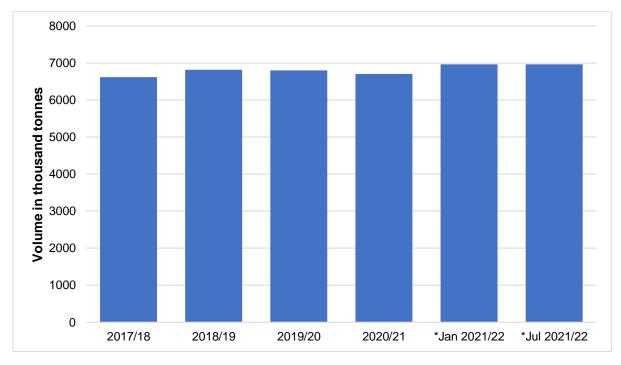


Figure 4: Global production of grapefruits between 2017/18 and 2021/22 Source: USDA (2022);

*Refers to an estimate

The global export of grapefruit is expected to reach 684 000 tonnes in 2021/22, 102 000 tonnes lower than the previous year (2020/21). This might be due to higher demand for domestic consumption in the top exporting countries. Imports on the other hand are projected to decrease from 719 000 tonnes to 660 000 tonnes, with lower projection imports from the EU, Russia and Ukraine.

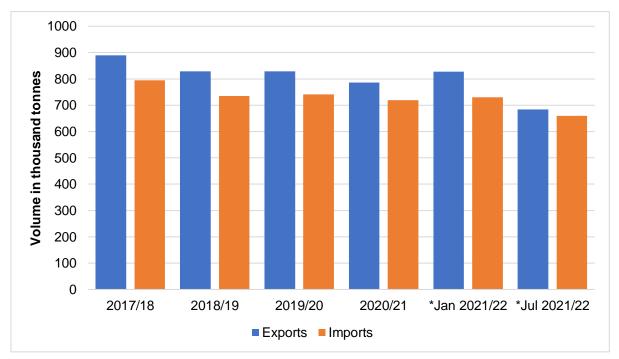


Figure 5: Global exports and imports of grapefruit between 2017/18 and 2021/22 Source: USDA (2022); *Refers to an estimate

South Africa is one of the top exporters of grapefruits and is ranked 1st in the world. Based on Figure 6, South Africa is expected to export approximately 275 000 tonnes of fresh grapefruits in 2021/22 However, the production of these fruits in South Africa is relatively low as compared to the leading producer, China. This might mean that South Africa is producing mostly for exports (72% of production) and to increase the foreign income than for local consumption and processing, while in other countries the production is mainly for local consumption.

Figure 6 illustrates grapefruit production and exports in South Africa over the 4-year period: 2017/18 to 2021/22. South Africa's area planted for grapefruit was 8 952 hectares in 2021, with production regions being in Limpopo (5 029 ha), Mpumalanga (1 802 ha), KwaZulu-Natal (876 ha) and others (1 245 ha). Grapefruit production is cyclical in nature, where two or three seasons of upward growth in production are normally followed by a downward production trend. It can be noted from Figure 6 that South Africa is currently in an upward growth cycle in terms of grapefruit production. Grapefruit production is expected to grow by 8%, from 351 043 metric tons in 2020/21 to 380 000 metric tons in 2021/22. The summer rainfall season started normally in most growing regions with widespread rains that continued throughout the season. In 2020/21, South Africa exported a record amount of 290 000 tonnes of grapefruit, an

increase of 19% from the 244 000 tonnes exported in 2019/20. Despite the global shipping crisis, civil unrest in the KwaZulu-Natal province, and a cyber-attack on the Transnet port systems, the industry managed to export record volumes of grapefruit. This was mainly due to an almost 20% surge in exports to China. In fact, China was the leading market for South African grapefruit exports in 2020/21, accounting for 27% of total exports (Trade Map, 2022).

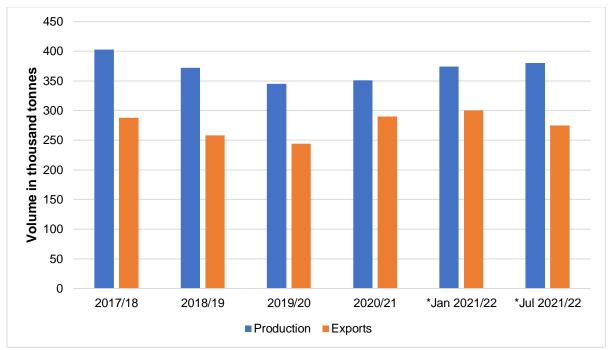


Figure 6: South Africa's production and exports of grapefruit, 2017/18 to 2021/22. Source: USDA (2022) *Refers to an estimate

The Citrus Growers Association (CGA) indicated that grapefruits exports are expected to reach 12.8 million 17-kilogram cartons, although the final figure could be influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with Russia being a major importer of South African grapefruit.

End of week 35 Million 15 kg cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original estimate	Latest prediction	Final packed
SOURCE: PPECB/AGR IHUB	2020	2021	2022	2021	2022	2022	2022	2021
Grapefruit PP (17 kg)		2.7 m	2.5 m	2.2 m	2.0 m			
Grapefruit Class 1 &2 (17kg)		12.6 m	11.9 m	12.5 m	10.8 m			
Grapefruit	15.9 m	17.3 m	16.4 m	16.7 m	14.4 m	16.8 m	16.6 m	17.5 m
Lemons	26.9 m	29.5 m	33.7 m	27.7 m	32.3 m	32.3 m	34.0 m	31.0 m
Total	42.8 m	62.1 m	64.5 m	59.1 m	59.5 m	49.1 m	50.6 m	48.5 m

Table 3: Estimates of South Africa's grapefruit and lemons exports (week 35)

Source: CGA (2022)

The local sales of grapefruit the NFPMs is shown in **Figure 7**. The markets sold a total of 3 382.82 tonnes in 2020 and 3 140.46 tonnes in 2021. The peak season for grapefruit is between April and July, where the largest volumes are sold. The highest prices for grapefruit were seen in January 2020 and 2021 when they sold for R17 811.97/tonne and R17 059.49/tonne.

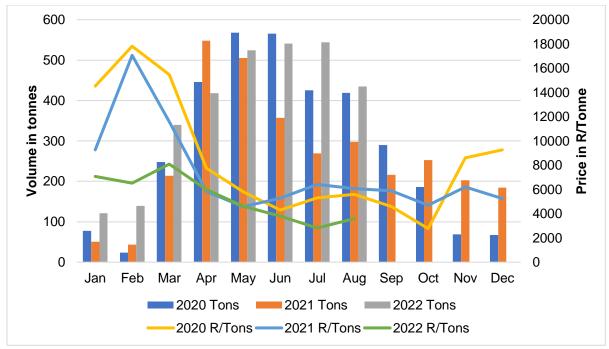


Figure 7: Sales of grapefruit at NFPMs Source: DALRRD (2022)

3.2 Lemons and Limes

The global production of lemons will increase by 7% to 9.7 million tonnes in 2021/22 compared to 9.1 million tonnes in 2020/21 (**Figure 8**), supported by increased production in Mexico, Argentina, Turkey and the United States. Mexico will increase production by 7% from 2.9 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 3.2 million tonnes in 2021/22, Argentina by 6% from 1.8 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 1.9 million tonnes in 2021/22, Turkey by 22% from 1.1 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 1.337 million tonnes in 2021/22 and the United States by 17% from 757 000 tonnes in 2020/21 to 882 000 tonnes in 2021/22.

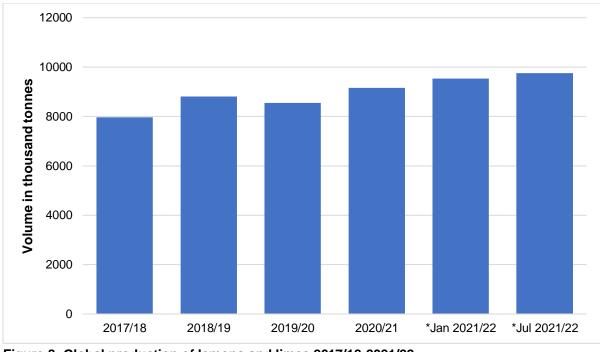


Figure 8: Global production of lemons and limes 2017/18-2021/22 Source: USDA (July 2022) *Refers to an estimate

Figure 9 shows that 2021/22 global imports of lemons/limes will increase to around 2.345 million tonnes from 2.3145 million tonnes in 2020/21, as the available domestic production sufficiently meets local demand. Exports of lemons are projected to slightly increase from 2.416 million tonnes in 2020/21 to 2.541 million tonnes in 2021/22, an increase of 5%. Turkey will be the new largest exporter with 765 000 tonnes exported, followed by Mexico at 730 000 tonnes and South Africa at 530 000 tonnes.

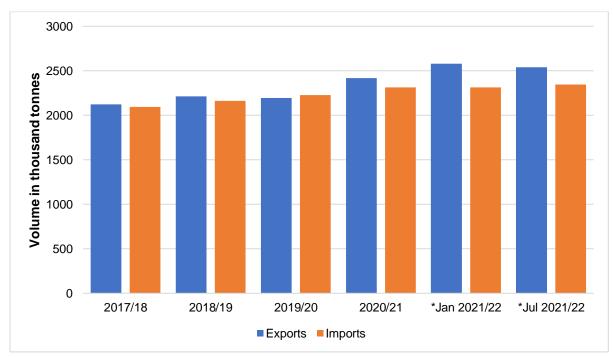


Figure 9: Global exports and imports of lemons and limes, 2017/18-2021/22

Source: USDA (2022) *Refers to an estimate

Figure 10 estimates production of lemons/limes will grow by 7% to a historic record of 670 000 metric tons in 2021/22. This estimate is based on conducive weather conditions and an increasing number of young trees approaching full bearing capacity (USDA, 2022). In 2020/21 and 2019/20, South Africa produced 626 791 metric tons and 619 522 metric tons of lemons/limes, respectively (CGA, 2022).

South Africa's exports of lemons/limes are estimated to rise by 6% to a record level of 530 000 metric tons in 2021/22, from 499 000 metric tons in 2020/21. This estimate is based on higher production, growth in demand from the Middle Eastern and Asian markets – with South Africa sending its first shipment of lemons/limes to China recently- and the reopening of the hospitality industry in Europe after COVID-19. The EU and United Kingdom remain the main export markets for South African lemons/limes, accounting for more than 40% of total exports. However, the Russia-Ukraine conflict will influence normal trading patterns. In 2020/21, South Africa exported 40 746 metric tons of lemons/limes to Russia, representing 8% of total exports. Lemon/lime exports to Ukraine were small, at around 4 060 metric tons.

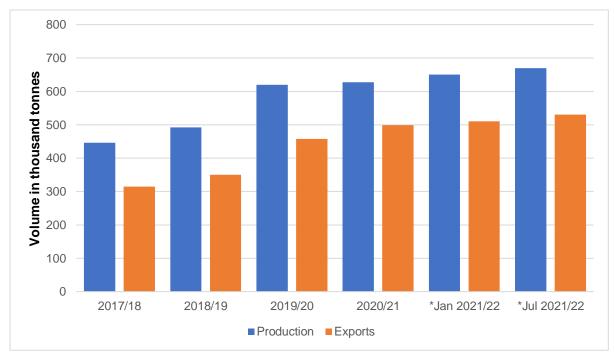


Figure 10: South Africa's production and exports of lemons and limes, 2017/18-2021/22. Source: USDA (2022) *Refers to an estimate

The quantities and average prices of lemons sold at the NFPMs are depicted in **Figure 11**. The total volume sold in 2020 was 2 4747.38 tonnes and 2 5983.29 tonnes in 2021. The largest quantities were sold in July 2020 with 3 584.21 tonnes at R4 404.85/tonne followed by August 2021 with 3 159.75 (R 2 805.20/tonne). The lowest volumes are sold during out of season in January and February.

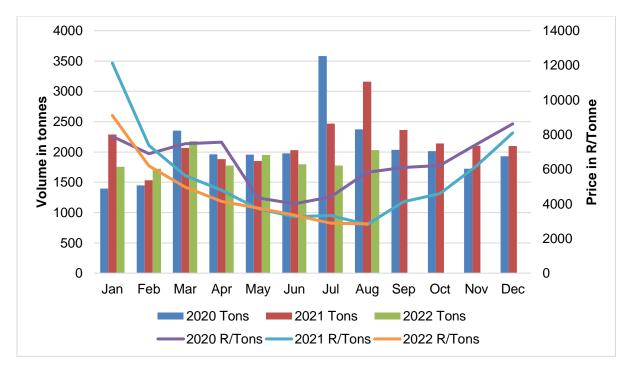


Figure 11: Sales of lemons at NFPMs Source: DALRRD (2022)

Conclusion

Although the country is set to increase its exports of citrus, the industry has been riddled with export market challenges, including the EU enforcing cold treatment to citrus due to concerns of false coddling moth. Europe remains the largest market for grapefruit and lemons and the industry has over the years made efforts to diversify its markets. South Africa is gaining ground in the Middle East for lemons as well as South East Asia for grapefruits and diversification will become more important as the EU imposes more stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures. Government and industry will also need to maintain good relations with existing markets by adhering to SPS measures and this will need investment in inspection services in the country.

4. Stringent sanitary and phytosanitary measures in the EU market continue to constrain South Africa's citrus trade: A case of Citrus Black Spot (CBS) and the False Coddling Moth (FCM)

by Bhekani Zondo and Moses Lubinga

The South African citrus industry is forecasted to reach its all-time high record of 2.7 million metric tons (MT) of citrus exports by the end of the 2021/22 season. This is mainly attributed to an increase in the new areas reserved for production, increased global demand for South Africa's citrus, and the favourable weather conditions which supported the increased citrus harvest. In value terms, citrus is South Africa's largest horticultural export product, and in the year 2021 citrus amounted to a gross production value (GPV) of R25.4 billion (BFAP, 2022). GPV is forecasted to surpass R40 billion by the year 2031 provided that production volumes and prices increase (BFAP, 2022). The demand for South Africa's citrus exports has also increased in new markets such

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as the United States of America (USA) in addition to existing markets in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East (Tridge, 2022). In the 2020/21 season, South Africa's citrus exports reached a record 100 thousand MT in the USA market due to the duty-free exports in this region promoted under the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Over the years, the European Union (EU) has always been the major export destination for SA's citrus export. According to the Citrus Grower Association of South Africa (CGA) annual report of 2022, in the 2020/2021 season, Europe accounted for about 36% and 35% of all oranges and grapefruit exports from SA, while soft citrus and lemons accounted for 26% and 37%, respectively. Despite the EU's importance to South Africa's citrus produce, the industry continues to be challenged by the stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures imposed to control the prevalence of Citrus Black Spot (CBS) and the False Coddling Moth (FCM). The EU classifies CBS as a quarantine pest based on the concerns that it might spread across Europe, however, there is a lack of scientific evidence to support this claim (Tralac, 2014). These SPS measures are in effect regardless of the binding free trade agreement between South Africa and the EU, through which South Africa's citrus fruits has duty-free access into the EU market. The citrus industry estimates that complying with the SPS measures imposed by the EU costs the industry about R4 Billion (USDA, 2021).

In May 2022, the EU enacted new cold treatment requirements (including precooling at 5 °C at the port of departure along with an in-transit treatment of between -1°C and 2 °C for 25 days) for citrus exports destined for the EU originating from other countries (*SA included*). These new measures are aimed at protecting member states from phytosanitary risks like FCM from spreading to other crops (*including citrus*) (Tridge, 2022). This exacerbated the existing challenges that the local industry is currently facing with regard to the EU in terms of the citrus trade, e.g., the high cost of complying with the many SPS which have posed a barrier to trade, especially for the smallholder citrus producers. This means that SA needs to invest in new extreme cold treatment procedures despite the existing systems in place that ensure compliance with the pre-existing EU SPS measures in line with the prevention of CBS and FCM.

The immediate enforcement of the new regulations without prior engagement with trading partners in South Africa's presented a risk of losing South Africa's consignment that was *en route* at the time of the enactment of the regulation took effect. According to CGA (2022b), SA could potentially incur a loss of about R605 Million worth of citrus exports that were already *en route* to this region as they would be destroyed at the EU ports as the new regulations would apply to them. However, key industry role players in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform (DALRRD) managed to negotiate a settlement for the release of the consignments that were locked up in EU ports. SA also initiated a trade dispute with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to challenge these new regulations subjected to SA's citrus exports. Despite the comprehensive and effective FCM and CBS risk management systems in place by the local citrus industry, CGA (2022a) reckons that during the 2021 EU market season, SA recorded about 45 CBS and 15 FCM interceptions which further worsened the fragile relationship with the EU market.

The citrus industry is already faced with several other challenges including escalating input prices (i.e., fuel and fertilizer), soaring shipping costs, as well as, operational

challenges involving the ports. Hence, the profitability and sustainability of the industry continue to be compromised and this could potentially limit further investments, as well as new entrants in the value chain (especially the emerging farmers) from playing a significant role in the industry.

Given these challenges, in addition to the prohibitive measures imposed by the EU market, the major export destination for SA's citrus, there is a need to consider the following:

- The industry in partnership with the government should invest more in research and development (R&D) in cold sterilisation innovations and the breeding of cultivars resistant to pests and diseases of concern in both the existing and potential export markets. Beyond the R&D, there is a need to render the technologies more affordable and easily accessible to both producers and traders,
- Industry role players should consider investing in the establishment of new markets other than focusing more on the EU (*i.e.*, market diversification). South Africa's industry and government should regularly engage with their counterparts in the EU to plan together on the implementation and enforcement of regulations, especially when there are new or updated regulations. This will minimise the occurrence of abrupt enactment of regulations and also mitigate the likely losses to be incurred by South Africa's traders.

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Useful Links

Agrihub Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) Citrus Growers' Association (CGA)	<u>www.agrihub.co.za</u> <u>www.bfap.co.za</u>
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)	<u>www.cga.co.za</u> <u>www.daff.gov.za</u>
Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF)	<u>www.fao.org/docrep</u> <u>www.fpef.co.za</u>

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Hortgro Services	<u>www.hortgro.co.za</u>
National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC)	<u>www.namc.co.za</u>
Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB)	<u>www.ppecb.com</u>
Quantec Easy Data	<u>www.quantec.co.za</u>
South African Subtropical Growers' Association (Subtrops)	www.subtrop.co.za
South African Table Grape Industry (SATGI)	<u>www.satgi.co.za</u>



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