

## Citrus could be a game-changer for Zimbabwean growers

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Because of their perceived immune-boosting benefits against COVID-19, citrus fruit is currently in high demand the world over. In April, the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (CGA) reported that demand for lemons from overseas markets doubled compared with the same period in 2019 while the Zimbabwe Citrus Growers Association shipped large consignments of lemons to Russia and the Middle East.

They forecast that this year's soft citrus production will reach two million cartons with 1,2 million cartons already packed, surpassing the 700 000 cartons packed over the same period last year. As demand has increased, indications are that supply has been failing to meet required numbers, pushing up the prices over the past few months.

### **Zimbabwe finalises its citrus export protocol**

According to Global Trade Review, a carton of lemons fetched between US\$50 and US\$60 in the Middle East in April 2020 against the normal price of US\$15 to US\$20 per carton.

The biggest citrus markets in the world include the United States (US) constituting 9% of global imports, Russia, Germany and Netherlands at 8% each, France (7%), United Kingdom (5%), China (4%) and Canada (3%).

China imports over one million tons of citrus products worth about US\$594 million. There is scope for Zimbabwean citrus producers to supply the Chinese market. To fully take advantage of the Chinese market, Zimbabwe's government is finalising a protocol on citrus, which will allow Zimbabwe direct access and entry into the Chinese market.

The good thing about Zimbabwe's tapping into the Chinese market is that it will ease over-reliance on the European market, allowing the country to diversify and hedge against price volatility. – *Fresh Plaza*

