

Black spot sours lemon-growers' mood

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By Sechaba kaNkosi

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Johannesburg - The South African citrus industry has once again suspended the export of organic lemons to the EU following fallout with the bloc over the citrus black spot.

The Citrus Growers Association (CGA) EU envoy Deon Joubert said yesterday that the industry took the decision after the EU detected the spot in three consignments of local organic lemons.

"Today's decision to ring-fence the commodity and remove any possible risk stemming from it was not an easy one," said Joubert. "Moreover, it comes with a hefty price tag and financial loss for organic lemon growers."

The local industry has been involved in intensive negotiations, particularly with the EU, over the citrus black spot which forced them to focus their attention on growing citrus exports into the Middle East and south-east Asian markets.

The industry said despite its efforts to resolve the impasse, including new testing regimes and a comprehensive risk management plan, no deal had been reached with the EU.

But Joubert said the CGA was still hopeful that a solution could be found. "The CGA, together with its partners in the government, remain committed to working with the EU towards a long-term resolution."



Photo: Sxc.hu

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