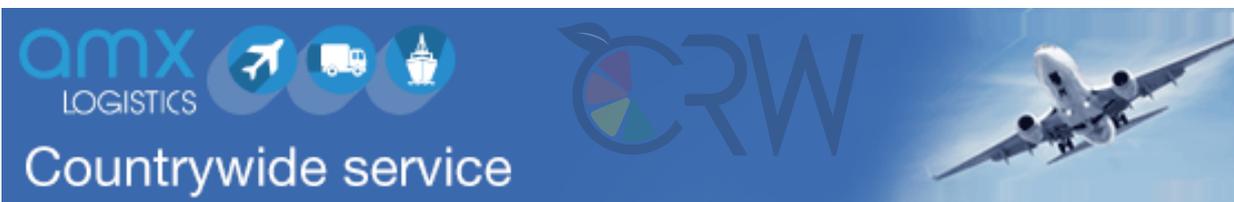


**IMPORTS AND EXPORTS / DOMESTIC / INTERNATIONAL****High hopes of new market access for SA citrus**

Yesterday - by Staff reporter



Moves to gain access to the Philippines for South African citrus appear to be gaining ground.

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According to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick, South Africa applied for citrus access to the Philippines in 2009.

The pest risk assessment (PRA) process is nearing completion, says Chadwick, and last week a delegation from Fruit South Africa, PPECB and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries visited the country in an effort to finalise the process.

Assisted by Ambassador Slabber and his team at the South African embassy in Manila, the delegation met with BPI (Philippines plant health) and other interested stakeholders.

According to Chadwick, the Philippines imports 330 700 tons of fruit from around the world. The biggest volume is apples (153 000 tons); citrus takes second slot with mandarins

(77 000 tons), fifth slot with oranges (22 000 tons) and sixth slot with lemons (3 000 tons). Only 285 tons of grapefruit were imported in the last year.

He says the largest mandarin suppliers are China (65%) and Pakistan (21%) while from the southern hemisphere imports come from Argentina (11%) and Australia (3%).

Orange imports are dominated by Australia (34%), with Argentina (6%) also supplying counter-seasonal fruit. “Northern hemisphere orange suppliers are China (27%), USA (25%) and Pakistan (8%),” says Chadwick who points out that there was considerable interest in South African fruit, and disappointment from potential consumers that fruit access was still under negotiation.

“The limited summer supply of citrus results in high prices and little choice – with some importers complaining about the quality they have received in the past year. Hopefully, they will have more choice in the near future.”

