

Jaco Burger – Market Demand Fruits:

South African citrus will benefit from Europe's reduced stone fruit crop

Despite a general shortage of containers offered by shipping lines, the shipping process is running smoothly. Notably, the average age of their shipments is much younger on arrival than had been the case during most recent seasons, says Jaco Burger, managing director of Market Demand Fruits, as a result of improved logistics.

The outlook for the rest of the season remains favourable: lower stonefruit volumes from Italy, Spain, and Greece will keep demand firm for citrus over the longer run, and will potentially be very positive for soft citrus, especially.

Heavy rain is falling in the Western Cape, and the province's citrus harvest will move on with a week.

Fresh orange exports are again competitive this season. The juice price in the Western Cape is still very good, he says, but the total price (of which farmers receive the final instalment twelve months after delivery) is not yet known, introducing a degree of uncertainty into the juicing sector.

Market Demand Fruits provides fresh navels to the UK, Europe, and the United States.

The US market has been a steady beacon during recent difficult seasons for those lucky enough to have access (only the Western and Northern Cape provinces). He remarks that as yet, the US market has not changed palpably, and under the temporary tariff of 10%, they are loading out as usual.

If, however, on 9 July the United States announces a tariff of 31% on South African imports, they will be in deep trouble. "If it remains at the current 10% we can manage. But we need the US market, a farm needs those price premiums in order to be lucrative."



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Record clementine volumes

Burger agrees with the general favourable assessment of the 2025 lemon campaign.

Of late, mandarins, he says, they do not have sufficient quantities for the demand of the season. They're taking the first late mandarins in receipt from Brits, North West Province, before moving over to their primary areas of origin, the Western and the Eastern Cape.

"There was a very good crop of clementines and clementine types this year," Burger says. "So far – and it's still quite early into the soft citrus season for us – the quality is a definite improvement on last year."

He adds that record volumes of clementines were shipped during weeks 23 to 25 because of the big shortage early on in the season. He'll be keeping a close watch on the impact of these arrivals on the market.



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Strong anchor of English retail

"We are very strongly positioned in the supermarkets in England. That's our main thing. This year, we were awarded more programmes at two retailers. It gives us a great deal of stability in our supply. Access to English supermarket programmes provides a good, stable outlet for our shareholders and outside growers."

They are also in Canada, in Europe, and in Russia, but minimize their exposure to the Middle East, a market that can change overnight.

For more information:

Jaco Burger



Market Demand Fruits

Tel: +27 21 874 2028

Email: trading@marketdemandfruits.co.za

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