

CITRUS FCM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM Update for 2020



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The Citrus FCM Management System (FMS) for export of citrus (excluding lemons) to the EU has now been applied for two years. Although the FMS has been scientifically proven to be an effective alternative to a stand-alone postharvest cold treatment, interceptions of live FCM larvae were reported by the EU in 2018 and 2019. This highlights a critical need to implement the FMS more effectively. In October 2019 representatives from all stakeholder groups in the citrus industry analysed and deliberated where improvements to the FMS should be introduced to ensure it is implemented better. These proposed changes were shared with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). After consideration, amendments to the FMS applicable for 2020 were then formally communicated to the industry at the annual Citrus Export Coordinating Meeting held in Nelspruit on 13 November 2019. At that time DALRRD issued a strong warning to the industry to urgently ensure full and effective implementation of the FMS to avoid serious consequences in the future.

In that light, and as the 2020 citrus season gets underway, it is prudent to again point out to the citrus industry some key areas of the revised FMS. All stakeholders are strongly advised to ensure they have a full understanding of the entire FMS and to be aware of communication relating to the implementation for 2020, such as Cutting Edge 284 and the requirement for compulsory training. CRI is preparing training material in collaboration with the Citrus Academy, which should be available to the industry early in 2020. However, growers and packhouses may use other credible training material if they so choose.

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The following key changes to the FMS apply and stakeholders should be aware of them and the implications for their operations:

- **Orchard Sanitation:** Better orchard sanitation is required with the FMS becoming more prescriptive in terms of how orchard sanitation is undertaken.
- **Pre-harvest fruit infestation monitoring:** Key personnel need to be trained (i.e. be able to demonstrate proper training) to ensure effective fruit infestation monitoring is implemented, including how to set up monitoring points within the orchards.
- **Packhouse verification:** Only packhouses that have applied and been verified by DALRRD may export citrus to the EU.
- **Packhouse staff training:** Compulsory training for key packhouse staff is now an aspect of registration for the EU market.
- **Shipment temperature monitoring:** Exporters are required to share temperature monitoring data to ensure the prerequisite time-temperature parameters are being met.
- **Packhouse grading:** Changes to the FMS make it clear that training is required for packhouse graders, and specifications are laid down for the conditions under which grading must take place.
- **PPECB oversight:** Provision is made for PPECB to provide greater oversight relating to FMS activities at the packhouse.
- **PhytClean Update:** Enhancements to PhytClean have been introduced to allow for orchards to be placed "on-hold", and growers and packhouse managers can also withdraw orchards that are no longer suitable for the EU market.
- **Corrective actions and data analysis:** Greater use of available PhytClean data will take place in 2020, specifically around monitoring FCM interceptions and how this may trigger an orchard going "on-hold". The performance of exported product will have a direct and immediate impact on the current status of an orchard under the FMS.
- **Compliance Auditing System:** Compliance monitoring will be enhanced through audits. Growers will be audited for 2019 and 2020 during farm visits.
- **Automated pre-verification:** The mechanism by which pre-verification is to take place at the packhouse will change in 2020 as automation is introduced via the eLOT NOTICE process. Packhouses will need to adapt to this new approach where the status of a particular pallet is also tracked.

Failure to ensure compliance with all of the above places the industry's continued access to this critical market in serious jeopardy. All stakeholders are strongly advised to ensure they are familiar with what is required from them well before packing takes place.