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South African summer citrus hits U.S. shores

by Chip Carter and John Houy | July 05, 2016

South African summer citrus



CHICAGO — Two decades ago, summer citrus wasn't much of a factor in U.S. produce departments. Since then, new import programs from around the globe have filled gaps in the schedule, none more notably than the ever-growing summer citrus from South Africa deal.

Now in its 17th season, Summer Citrus from South Africa operates as a remarkable cooperative effort by four main importers — AMC, Capespan, DNE World Fruit Sales and Seald Sweet — representing more than 350 South African growers.

We caught up with South African growers and industry representatives at United Fresh, held here at McCormick Place June 20-24, just hours before the first shipment of summer Navels arrived in Philadelphia for distribution to U.S. markets starting this week.

Clementines began arriving in mid-May and will run through late July, according to Seald Sweet International Sales Director Stu Monaghan. "They will be immediately followed by late-season mandarins, such as Clemengolds, which will run through late September. Navels will run through mid-September. Midnights will begin mid-September and will be in our market through mid-October."