

South African Summer Citrus well established in US market

South Africa Summer Citrus is looking forward to another year of exports to the US. The start of exports depends on the duration of the domestic season and this season with the weather being such a significant factor this remains unknown. But regardless of this the South African citrus will only be shipped when it is ready and at peak quality for the US market.

Last season South Africa shipped a total of 39,644 tons of citrus, including Clementines, Navel oranges, Midnight oranges, Cara Cara oranges and grapefruit, was shipped to the U.S. from May through October.

The U.S. market received 4,773 tons of Clementines; 24,982 tons of navel oranges and 8,705 tons of Midnight oranges, 984 tons of Cara Cara oranges; and 200 tons of grapefruit.

The citrus is produced in South Africa's Western and Northern Cape regions by some 300 South African growers eligible to export summer citrus to the U.S. They are the only growers in South Africa whose farming practices enable the products to sufficiently meet and exceed the very stringent US requirements for export to the US.



These growers are part of the Western Cape Citrus Producers Forum (WCCPF), established to facilitate logistical, marketing and sales support coordination of products for its members. Its mission is to maintain and expand its role as the preferred supplier in the U.S. and throughout the world, and continue to be a reliable supplier of safe summer citrus for the U.S. and all global markets.

The category of summer citrus has by now been established and US consumers expect to have the options to purchase it as part of a full fruit basket. The South African product is superior in eating quality and competes well with other options which might be available.

Consistently over the years, South African citrus has earned the trust of its importer partners and retail stores, as well as the confidence of the US consumers. The importers and groceries rely on the every 10 day arrival of the fruit to meet the demand and consumers know they can be confident the fruit will taste fresh and delicious, and be chemical free. It is a safe choice for their table.

In store promotions and point of sale sampling has proven very successful in moving the American consumer from awareness of South African Summer Citrus to a preference for its sweet and delicious eating quality. Knowing that US consumers want to know the details about where their food comes from, the grower visit components to the point of sale sampling has been very well received.

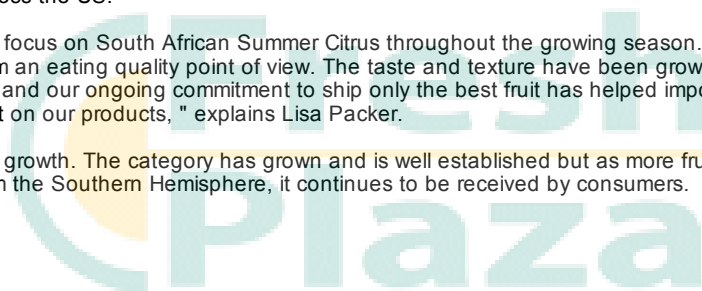


In addition, over the last few years the WCCPF has increased its relationship with US Youth Soccer. Visibility at various US Youth Soccer tournaments has resulted in more direct access to the fastest growing youth sport in the US. These efforts are resulting in a deeper connection of South African Summer Citrus and the 3 million youth players between age of 5-19 as well as the US "Soccer Mom" who is recognizing the value of summer citrus as part of a nutritious diet for their families. We intend to continue to grown this relationship with Youth Soccer and increase our presence with the sport all across the US.

"We would prefer if retailers would focus on South African Summer Citrus throughout the growing season. We believe it is a superior product from an eating quality point of view. The taste and texture have been growing in preference among US consumers and our ongoing commitment to ship only the best fruit has helped importers and retailers become even more reliant on our products," explains Lisa Packer.

There is continued opportunity for growth. The category has grown and is well established but as more fruit has continued to enter the market from the Southern Hemisphere, it continues to be received by consumers.

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Publication date: 4/2/2012

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