

South Africa: Citrus Export Estimates for 2017

The March 2017 citrus export estimates are similar to those of 2015.

A total of 122.8 million 15kg-cartons are expected to be packed for export purposes.

JOHN EDMONDS



Valencias Overall export figures are pegged at 19% higher than 2016 (50 million cartons versus 42 million cartons). The Valencia estimate in the Hoedspruit is up by 95%, to more than 5 800 000 cartons, recovering from the double-whammy of drought and a huge hail storm. There are also young trees coming into production this season. Other regions in the northern areas are also expected to see some recovery from the drought effects.

Navels are expected to be stable at 26.3 million cartons, 1% improvement on drought affected 2016, but the Eastern Cape regions expect a difficult year with Eastern Cape Midlands down 10%, Patensie down 7% and the Sundays River Valley estimating a 20% drop in exports. Wind during blossoming and fruit set and excessive heat has affected yields and fruit drop and splitting is reported from both these regions. The Sunday's River region fear that export volume could even fall below their 5 million cartons estimate. The decrease will be partially offset by export increases of 21% in the Senwes region and 9% in the Western Cape. The Western Cape expect a normal range of fruit sizes.

Lemons The lemon harvest is up 16% to 17.5 million cartons, with all regions showing increased estimates. In the largest lemon production areas of the Sundays River Valley and Senwes, increases of 16% and 29% respectively are expected, reflecting an expansion in lemon orchard acreage. This trend is evident in other regions too with a 94% increase in the Orange River region from a low base of about 89 000 cartons to almost 173 000 cartons, Onderberg with a projected 47% increase. Hoedspruit with a 37% increase recovers from drought and hail and shows additional growth.

The Sundays River Valley expect fruit to be a count smaller this year and report that a "beautiful lemon crop is on its way". Senwes are possibly going to start one or two weeks early this year. They also expect a slightly smaller fruit size. Western Cape also expect smaller lemons due to hot, dry conditions. Limpopo River will have similar volumes to 2016 and a smaller fruit size. Eastern Cape Midlands expect volumes similar to last year and possibly smaller fruit.

Soft citrus producers' estimates are 16% higher (13.2 million cartons) than the 12.1 million cartons of soft citrus exported last year. There will be an increase in specifically late mandarins, as many newcomers to the citrus industry are turning to late mandarins.

Boland, the biggest soft citrus exporting region with an expected 3.5 million cartons (5% up on last year are expecting a good size range for their late mandarins. The Western Cape region reports that Satsumas and Clementines look good with some new orchards coming in although the heat will affect sizes. Satsumas may be a week earlier. Patensie will start picking Satsumas week 10 due to warm, dry weather effect on colour. The Clementine crop is down due to alternating crop and dry weather. Novas are one count smaller than 2016.

Nadorcotts expected to be one size smaller and a smaller crop. The Sunday's River Valley expect smaller sized fruit from their Satsuma and Clementine harvests. Novas and late mandarins show growth due to new plantations coming into production.

Grapefruit An estimate of 13.4 million cartons is forecast, a healthy increase of almost 2 million cartons. Of this, the vast majority is red grapefruit (12 million cartons) and the rest is white grapefruit. In a trend similar to that of Valencias, the recovery from drought sees Letsitele up 10%, Limpopo River up 18% and Hoedspruit up 52%. Hoedspruit expects early colour development, good size spread and a heavy crop load. Letsitele expects good pack-outs. Onderberg expects similar volumes to 2016 with a good size range, peaking on 35s and 45s. Colour development is early. Oranje Rivier expects a 14% growth with slightly smaller fruit than 2016; peaking 35, then 40. They expect to harvest from weeks 15 to 34. Sunday's River reports that orchards have been removed and expect their export volumes to be 20% down. Swaziland expects a smaller crop with early colour development and a fair spread of fruit sizes.

CGA Region	Valencia (15 kg)	Navels (15 kg)	Lemons (15 kg)	Soft citrus (15 kg)	Grapefruit (15 kg)	Grapefruit (17 kg)	Total Citrus (15 kg)
S.R. Valley	6,500,000	5,000,000	8,000,000	1,485,000	226,667	200,000	21,211,667
Senwes	5,400,000	7,285,830	3,610,000	706,000			17,001,830
Letsitele	11,774,000		220,000	185,000	4,533,333	4,000,000	16,712,333
W. Cape	4,800,000	7,128,000	700,000	2,509,977			15,137,977
Hoedspruit	5,843,000		830,000	1,100	4,129,867	3,644,000	10,803,967
Patensie	2,200,000	3,400,000	720,904	2,082,700	226,667	200,000	8,630,270
Nelspruit	2,900,000	1,950,000	600,000	1,495,000			6,945,000
Limpopo River	5,000,000		370,000	40,500	1,275,000	1,125,000	6,685,500
Boland	200,000	295,000	1,200,000	3,501,810			5,196,810
Onderberg	1,160,000		40,000	-	2,582,396	2,278,585	3,782,396
E. Cape Midlands	50,000	850,000	490,000	1,062,773			2,452,773
Oranje Rivier	464,049		172,810	127,980	1,199,342	1,058,243	1,964,181
Nkwalini	170,000		230,000	22,000	809,200	714,000	1,231,200
S-KZN	185,000	205,000	222,000	-			612,000
Pongola	70,000		95,000	-	210,800	186,000	375,800
VaalHarts	50,000	212,000	30,000	2,500			294,500
Other		-	-	-	-	-	-
Zimbabwe	2,850,000				164,333	145,000	3,014,333
Swaziland	440,000				316,767	279,500	756,767
TOTAL	50,056,049	26,325,830	17,530,714	13,222,340	15,674,372	13,830,328	122,809,304