

PRESS STATEMENT BY JUSTIN CHADWICK

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Signing of South Africa-Chinese lemon protocol will attract R325 million new export revenue and secure 800 jobs

The Citrus Growers' Association of South Africa welcomes the recent signing of a revised citrus protocol between South Africa and China by Minister of Agriculture, Land Affairs and Rural Development Thoko Didiza.

With local lemon production expected to grow by 175 000 metric tons by 2024, the finalisation of the revised protocol means China will now become a critical new market for this growth and will secure R325 million in new export revenue and secure 800 jobs in the industry.

The revised protocol was six years in the making, following a request submitted by the citrus industry to exempt lemons from the current regulatory requirements for False Coddling Moth (FCM) in light of the category not being a host for the pest.

Up to now, Argentina and Chile have dominated southern hemisphere lemon exports to China. However, once the revised protocol is in place, South Africa is expected to surpass both countries, exporting 25 000 tons of lemons to China by 2024.

The local industry has already enjoyed phenomenal growth in exports to China in recent years with shipments of grapefruit, orange and soft citrus reaching 130 000 metric tons in 2020.

We are thrilled that the finalisation of the revised protocol will further expand our reach in this critical market and would like to thank the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and Citrus Research International for their work on getting the revised protocol across the line.

This milestone also follows the recent first shipment of South African citrus to the Philippines, which will also result in new export earnings of close to R205 million annually. The CGA looks forward to continue working with DALRRD, South African embassies, various government authorities and our industry

counterparts to keep on optimising, expanding and retaining key markets including China, United States of America, India, Philippines, Japan, Vietnam and the European Union.

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