

South Africa has more domestic lemons on the domestic market due to the loss of the Russian market

Detail Introduction :

At the moment, the Middle East, to which South Africa exports about a third of its lemons, is filling up with lemons that have not been able to be shipped to Russia, says an exporter who specializes in that market. By the end of last week, South Africa had already packed 2.6 million 15kg boxes of lemons and had exported over a million boxes, mostly to the Middle East, as is usual at this time of year. As expected since the beginning of the Russian war, the lemons that would have gone to Russia (large lemons and also class 2 fruit) are putting pressure on lemon prices in the Middle East market.



"The Middle East is predominantly a smaller lemon market, so if Russian fruit goes there, it's not what the market traditionally wants. This will cause the market to spiral downward," according to a citrus exporter from Limpopo. "The Middle East is no longer a market that accepts mediocre class fruit, the consumer wants quality fruit."

This season, 129,000 boxes were exported to Russia until the end of week 11, compared to 188,000 boxes in the same period in 2021.

In the Far East and Malaysia, however, prices for South African lemons are fair.

"This is the result of exporters not being able to ship lemons to Russia," says a citrus trader at the Johannesburg fresh produce market, where they have received fruit that could not be shipped to Russia.

The lemons grown for Russia, so to speak, are similar to what they would normally receive, the trader continues, although generally of better quality.

Also, the lemon market has been unpredictable in recent seasons, he adds.

"We are expecting a big oversupply in the domestic market due to Russia, but other markets could open up. We are taking it week by week."

Lemon prices are a bit lower for the early season, at R80 (€4.9) to R120 (€7.4) per 15kg box at the moment. The average price of class 1 lemon is R5.18 (0.3 euros) per kilogram; which is quite low for lemon grown in South Africa, according to another market agent in the Johannesburg market.