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## Zimbabwe citrus eyes China

Industry hopeful of supplying China in 2022 once new protocol is implemented



**Z**imbabwe is closing in on supplying its first shipments of citrus to China following the signing of a new protocol.

The protocol will see fruit exported via South Africa and a recent visit from a delegation of the South African Citrus Industry (CGA) saw CGA chief executive Justin Chadwick commend the progress of the Zimbabwean industry.

“Growers in Zimbabwe epitomise the word resilient,” said Chadwick. “In the late 1990s the Zimbabwean citrus industry was on an upward trajectory, with export volumes increasing and good quality fruit being exported. The government’s land reform agenda changed that trajectory – and production and exports slumped.”

Chadwick said the industry had been able to reverse this trend in recent years and export volumes have started to grow.

“This export growth will be further stimulated by the protocol signed between Zimbabwe and the People’s Republic of China, which allows for the export of citrus fruit to the PRC,” said Chadwick.

“There are still some administrative issues to conclude before implementation. If all goes well the Chinese consumers should be able to receive some safe, nutritious, and excellent quality Zimbabwean fruit in 2022.”

The roadshow was attended by over 40 delegates, many veterans of the industry but also several new entrants. There is a revival of citrus plantings in the north of the country which will see the present production increasing soon and Chadwick noted how growers had also embraced the sustainability agenda

“The farm we visited had

the biggest solar system that I have seen on a farm – with all daytime energy needs being supplied by their own solar system. The growers are also experimenting with drones for crop spraying,” said Chadwick.

Zimbabwe’s citrus is exported through South Africa and their estimate is normally included in the Southern African forecast. South African research institutions also support the Zimbabwean industry.

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