

Charles Rossouw – Roslé Boerdery

Fair demand from Europe for South African citrus

Autumn rain continues to fall over the Loskop Valley where lemons and clementines are waiting to be harvested.

The rain, blocking out picking this whole week, shouldn't set them back very much, remarks Charles Rossouw of Roslé Farming.

"Usually we fire up over weeks 19 and 20 but if we can't get out of the starting blocks this week, we'll likely catch up next week," he says.

"The Western Cape gets winter rain during their citrus harvest and their quality is very high, so the rain we're getting now won't have a bearing on the quality."

Colour development will benefit from chilly early autumn temperatures.

Fair market demand

"The market situation isn't what is hampering us - demand from Europe is good and it's offering us opportunities with reasonable prices. Elsewhere there's currently an oversupply of fruit, for instance of Egyptian Valencias of small calibres in the Middle East."

There is a general feeling among South African citrus growers that this could be a good orange season, and Charles shares the sentiment.

"The European market is empty of hard skins and of soft. Demand from Europe and the Far East is looking good – it's the costs that are hurting us."

He remarks that the Euro-Dollar exchange rate is slightly more favourable for South African producers who pay for input costs and, crucially, for shipping in US Dollars but shipping freight rates, he says, are creeping up again. Particularly problematic, he says, are the North-South shipping routes, running to Europe and to the Middle East.

Lemon campaign YTD close to 2021's numbers

South Africa's lemon harvest started earlier and has been running at a quick pace.

Packed and shipped volumes are at this stage not significantly ahead of the 2021 season.

"The tempo of delivery could be quicker but then follows the possibility that they could end earlier as well," he says.

Right: Roslé's packhouse near Groblersdal

"South Africa hasn't delivered many more lemons than two seasons ago, but when measured against last year, which started slower, it looks like a lot."



Transport down to Durban has been going; they've sent some citrus for the Middle East to Maputo as well.

Rail transport is, alas, completely off the table as cable theft paralyses the rail network.

For more information:

Charles Rossouw

Roslé Citrus

Tel: +27 71 699 0235

Email: charles@rosle.co.za

<https://www.rosle.co.za/>



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Author: [Carolize Jansen](#)

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