

Late and heavy rains lead to larger South African lemons

Late and heavy rains, especially in parts of Port Elizabeth, where key citrus-producing regions lie, have caused South African lemons to become larger than expected. This means that over the past weeks, farmers in the Eastern Cape have been picking significantly larger lemons, says Leroux Venter, chairman of the Lemon Focus Group of the Citrus Growers' Association.

Although the early rains in September 2021 signalled a good crop for the 2022 season, a lack of it in the middle of the season slowed the growth of lemons, which weren't reaching an ideal size.

Venter: "We started the harvest with slightly smaller fruit. We had good spring rains, then we didn't get the follow-up rains to help the size of the fruit [to] grow, so the first pickings of the season we saw were smaller."

The size of the fruit in the citrus industry is determined by the number of fruits a 15kg carton can take. Ideally, a 15kg box should fit 100, 113, or 138 lemons; anything above that is considered too small. During the first pickings for the season, a 15kg carton took as many as 162, Venter said.

"After the first fruit came off, the late rains helped a bit; now we're going to an 88 count," he said.

Source: [businessinsider.co.za](https://www.businessinsider.co.za)

Publication date: Thu 19 May 2022