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*Despite SA Citrus efforts*

**"EU remains aggressively protectionist on Citrus Black Spot"**

Despite one of South Africa’s best seasons on record in terms of preventing Citrus Black Spot (CBS) symptoms on fruit arriving at EU borders, the European Union seems determined to meet South Africa’s best efforts with unflinching bureaucratic coldness.

At a meeting in Brussels this Tuesday between the EU’s Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and a delegation of SA citrus producers, the EU begrudgingly acknowledged this year as a good season. However, it showed no interest in reviewing its position on CBS as a quarantine pest, demanding full compliance and refusing to consider any reasonable requests for relaxation of the excessive and unsustainable protocols governing the pest.

SA exported over 800 000 tonnes of citrus to the EU during the 2018 season (up to 40,000 containers), yet only 2 consignments were intercepted with CBS symptoms. None of these tested as viable fungi. SA has shown enormous capacity to mitigate the risk of CBS symptoms over the past 4 years, even though it does not agree with the EU that CBS poses any threat to the EU.

A recent independent study by the highly regarded Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy institute found that the SA citrus industry’s costs associated with the CBS protocols and proactive measures amount to a staggering R1.86 billion (€118 mln), a number that is clearly not sustainable. Furthermore, the CBS protocols also require intensive chemical spraying programmes, which is in conflict with a global move towards lower residue production.

According to [farmingportal.co.za](http://farmingportal.co.za/index.php/all-agri-news/press-release/1015-eu-digs-in-heels-and-remains-aggressively-protectionist-on-cbs-despite-sa-citrus-efforts)¸ the delegation of SA citrus producers were disappointed by the EU officials, apparently bent on increasing intensification of their CBS measures.

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