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Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Notification: In-transit cold treatment for export of citrus fruits from South Africa to India

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) is pleased to announce that the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in India have issued a new notification amending the Plant Quarantine (Regulation of Import into India) Order, 2003, as published in the official *Government Gazette*, No. 4232(E) with effect from 29 July 2026. The phytosanitary requirements outlined in the *Government Gazette* provides guidance on procedures to be followed, specifically for export of citrus fruit from South Africa to India.

As of 2016, India has required cold treatment to be either methyl bromide or land-based cold treatment to mitigate fruit flies such as the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*) and Natal fruit fly (*Ceratitis rosa*) for export of citrus from South Africa. Before these changes, in 2017, the Government of South Africa through the DoA had initiated bilateral engagements with the Government of India regarding the proposal for approval of in-transit cold treatment as a requirement for citrus exports. This lengthy process entailed the exchange of technical information between South Africa and India. It also included several trial shipments of citrus fruits to India to test and confirm whether the required standards and conditions are met.

Following this successful negotiation, citrus exporters and the citrus industry will be pleased to be informed that the Government of India has officially gazetted the "In-Transit Cold Treatment of Citrus originating from South Africa to India". The gazette was notified after the Government of India's publication to the World Trade Organisation-Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO-SPS) notification dated 13 May 2026 regarding in-transit cold treatment of citrus to India. The latest amendments to the import requirements focus specifically on fresh citrus fruits for consumption which includes lemons, limes, oranges, grapefruits, mandarins and other Rutaceous fruits originating from South Africa. Accordingly, all citrus consignments exported from South Africa to India must comply with the in-transit cold treatment requirements as prescribed in the gazetted import conditions. The finalisation of these requirements provides

greater regulatory certainty for South African citrus exporters and supports continued and sustainable access to the important Indian market.

The DoA would like to extend its gratitude to all the parties and/or industry players who played an active role which has resulted in the approval of the in-transit cold treatment of citrus fruits to India. This marks an important milestone for the DoA and the South African citrus industry at large, as consignments will now be treated en route and arrive at destinations on time while in quality condition. This further signal growth to the South African citrus industry, as it plays a significant role in terms of an increase in export market volumes, market diversification and job creation.

The DoA continues to negotiate new regulations/requirements with various importing countries for various South African plants and plant products and explore solutions to ensure safe and fair trade with our trading partners, as enshrined in international obligations and treaties.

The Minister of Agriculture, Willie Aucamp, has welcomed the development: "This is a great achievement for South African agriculture and a clear testament to how advanced technology empowers our farmers to push boundaries and share our high-quality produce with the world. India, with its 1.47 billion people represents an incredible growth opportunity for our citrus industry. Our harvest is counter-seasonal to India's own production, meaning South Africa is uniquely positioned to complement their local market, meeting the rising demand of health-conscious consumers for premium citrus and cementing a powerful, mutually beneficial trade relationship."

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