

**PRESS STATEMENT BY JUSTIN CHADWICK**

**CEO OF THE CITRUS GROWERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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***CGA writes to national government ahead of looming EU FCM regulation crisis that threaten orange exports and grower livelihoods***

On the eve of the 2023 citrus season kicking off, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has written to Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel and Minister of Agriculture Thoko Didiza requesting an urgent update about the government's interventions to help resolve the current impasse between South Africa and the European Union (EU) concerning the new False Coddling Moth (FCM) regime governing the importation of South Africa oranges to the region.

Despite months of consultations between both parties at a World Trade Organisation (WTO) level, it appears very limited progress has been achieved to avert the crisis that will face the industry should growers have to implement these new regulations when oranges start being shipped to European markets in less than two weeks' time.

This includes an estimated R500 million in losses to growers and around 20% of oranges produced for Europe not being shipped this season. With the industry facing a number of serious headwinds over the past two years, including soaring farm input and shipping costs; power outages and operational issues at ports, the 2023 season will be a make or break one for many growers. As a result, these new regulations, if implemented when the season kicks-off, could be the final nail in the coffin for many of them as well as the thousands of jobs they support.

The CGA is grateful for the support shown by the national government to date, but in order to safeguard the future sustainability of the industry as well as the 130 000 jobs it supports, we need urgent action before the end of this month if we hope to avert the impending crisis facing the sector. This should include by taking the next step, which is calling for the establishment of a WTO Panel to adjudicate on the matter.

The CGA maintains the position that the unjustified, discriminatory, and scientifically flawed new regulations are nothing more than a political move by Spanish producers to block South African citrus from entering the EU region. It is critical that national government draws a line in the sand

within the next two weeks, so we put a stop to this looming crisis threatening the number one agricultural exporter in our country. The CGA remains committed to continue working with national government on this critical matter in order to ensure the short-term and long-term survival of our industry.

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