

SA farmers want WTO dispute declared over EU citrus rules

By [Nelson Banya](#)

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South African citrus farmers want their government to lodge a complaint against the European Union at the World Trade Organisation over the European bloc's citrus black spot regulations which they say threaten thousands of jobs.



Image source: Rogério Martins from [Pexels](#)

The measures imposed by the EU in June 2022 require enhanced cold treatment for citrus exports due to concerns over False Codling Moth, a pest commonly found in sub-Saharan Africa, and Citrus Black Spot (CBS), a fungal disease which leaves dark spots on fruit.

The EU's plant health rules could cut South Africa's orange exports to Europe by 20% this year, according to the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (CGA).

South Africa's citrus industry says its current pest and disease control measures are highly effective and accuses the EU of protectionism.

Reuters has asked the EU and South Africa's trade department for comment. No other major citrus exporters have complained about the EU measures, which relate to pests and diseases that are most commonly found in South Africa.



SA citrus growers say EU pest rules putting squeeze on exports

Nelson Banya 28 Jun 2023



South African farmers are currently battling electricity and logistics challenges and increased input costs and cannot absorb the additional R2bn (\$106.98m) annual cost for CBS risk management, Deon Joubert, the CGA's special envoy on market access and EU matters, said in a statement.

"The CGA calls on the South African government to work with the industry to put a stop to these CBS regulations and fight for South African jobs and revenue. Declaring a WTO dispute is truly a matter of urgency," Joubert said.

The CGA says the EU citrus market currently sustains a total of 70,000 jobs in South Africa, generating about \$800m annually in annual export earnings.

Last year, South Africa lodged its first ever WTO dispute complaint when it challenged the EU's phytosanitary requirements for imports of oranges and other citrus products related to the False Codling Moth.

Consultations are still underway over that complaint, according to the latest update on the WTO website.

(\$1 = R18.6959)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reporting by Nelson Banya, editing by Angus MacSwan

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