US opens new ports to South African citrus exports

The United States government has announced the opening up of several new ports for the import for citrus products from South Africa, further facilitating two-way trade with South Africa.

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The US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service published a final notice in the US Federal Register on 5 November, approving the use of additional ports options for South African citrus growers.

Previously, the South African citrus industry was limited to the use of only four ports and had long sought access to other U.S. ports. With this announcement, exports will be allowed to any US port that has cold storage facilities, including the strategically important ports of Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia.

U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Lana Marks commented on the announcement, saying: "The opening of these new ports of destination for citrus, a move the U.S. Mission in South Africa has been advocating for, will help facilitate trade between our two countries going forward, providing flexibility to US retailers and wholesalers, lowering transportation costs, and broadening the reach of South African citrus to other regions within the US market."

Justin Chadwick, the CEO of the South African Citrus Growers Association, welcomed the news, adding that: "The opening up of all ports to South African citrus fruits means that this high quality, vitamin C rich fruit can now reach many more consumers in the United States. We would like to thank all those who made this possible, including the U.S. Embassy and the South African Embassy in Washington."

In 2020, according to Summer Citrus from South Africa, South Africa shipped a record amount of over 77,000 tonnes of citrus to the United States, 68% more than in 2019. South African farmers ship citrus duty-free to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference programme