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NEWS

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Slow progress on lifting of Thai ban on SA grapes

The lifting of the ban on South African grapes to Thailand may take a little longer than anticipated thanks to the slow pace of regulatory change due to political disruption in the country.

According to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick, who has just returned from an Asian visit, there's little evidence that the country is under military rule. "There is no sign of the military or the police throughout Bangkok and life goes on as usual. The only reminder is the slow pace of change – and in particular consideration of the changes required to once again allow South African table grapes access to the Thai market."

He is however confident that with the enthusiastic leadership of Ambassador Marks and the continued perseverance of her embassy staff the process will continue – hopefully with a favourable outcome in the near future.

In terms of citrus exports, SA shipments are moving into Thailand but not in any great volumes, says Chadwick.

"There is still a lot of work to be done to fully supply Thailand and other Asian markets," he said.

"There is little knowledge about South Africa and our ability to produce top quality product - with the accompanying assurance regarding food safety, ethical production and environmental awareness."



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