HORTGRO Stone
Growing Fruit IQ
home of the south african stone fruit producer

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Press Release

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South African Stone Fruit Export Crop Revised Downwards

South Africa's 2026/2027 stone fruit export crop estimates have been revised downwards following further assessments of crop development and export potential across the major production regions.

The lower export outlook reflects lighter fruit set across several production areas and accelerated seasonal development. Above-average daytime temperatures in July and August, along with temperature fluctuations during key stages of fruit development, accelerated phenological development. As a result, the earlier-than-usual season has led to smaller fruit sizes and reduced Class 1 pack-outs, ultimately lowering export volumes.

Smaller fruit and market challenges

The Middle East has traditionally played an important role in absorbing smaller fruit from South Africa's stone fruit crop. However, ongoing disruptions and uncertainty in the region have made this market difficult to access this season.

Last season, the Middle East accounted for approximately 63% of South Africa's apricot exports, 15% of nectarine and plum exports, and 36% of peach exports. As the season has moved earlier and fruit sizes have generally decreased, reduced access to this important market means less of the smaller fruit is expected to be exported, further reducing export crop estimates.

Nectarine export volumes are also influenced by strong local demand early in the season, providing an attractive alternative market for early-season fruit.

Directors: CG Herbst (Chairperson) - GC Hewitt (Vice-Chairperson) - AJ Smit - C Stander

Revised 2026/2027 export crop outlook

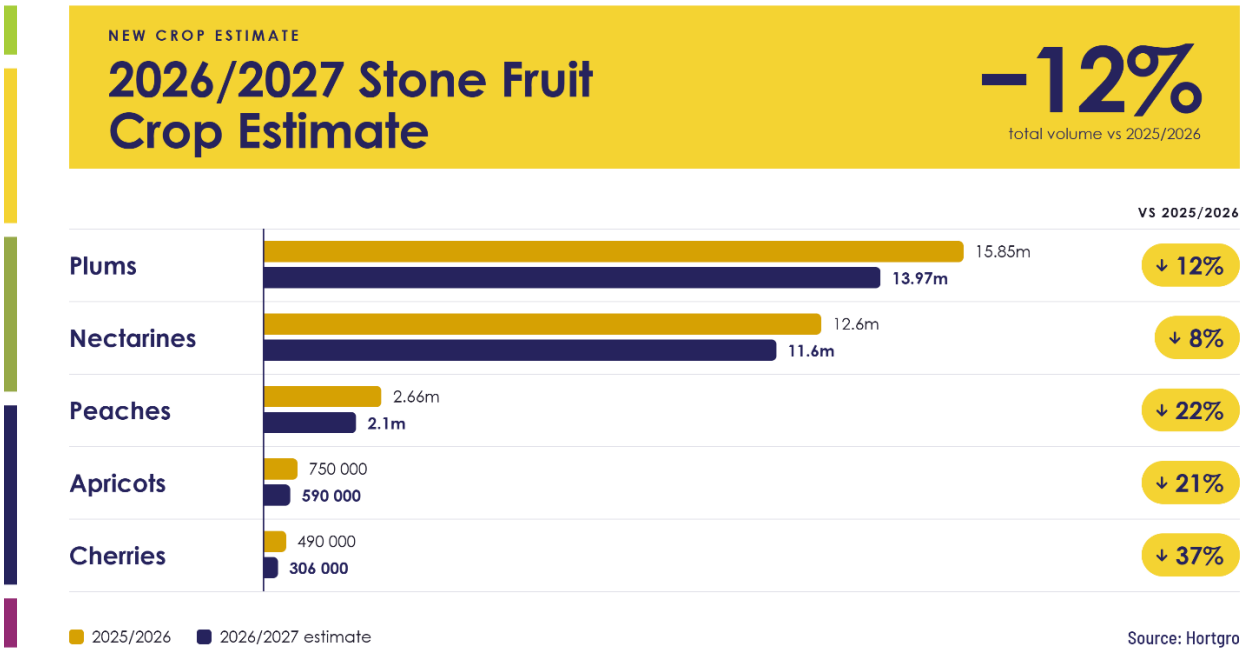
Compared with the previous season, South African stone fruit export volumes are now expected to decline as follows:

Apricots: Estimated at 590,000 4.75-kg-equivalent cartons, down 21% from 750,000 in 2025/2026.

Peaches: Estimated at 2.1 million 2.5-kg-equivalent cartons, down 22% from 2.66 million in 2025/2026.

Nectarines: Estimated at 11.6 million 2.5-kg-equivalent cartons, down 8% from 12.6 million in 2025/2026.

Plums: Estimated at 13.97 million 5.25-kg-equivalent cartons, down 12% from 15.85 million in 2025/2026.



The revised estimates reflect the combined impact of production conditions, fruit sizing and market accessibility. Hortgro will continue to monitor crop development, export performance and market conditions as the season progresses.