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Sustaining citrus delivery from Rooigras

Securing the ongoing commitment of Rooigras farm to service Capespan's grapefruit programme lay at the heart of the company's recent five-year lease contract on the property.

Rooigras was fundamental to Capespan's grapefruit strategy, especially the chemfree programme for Japan, said Capespan Fruit Division CEO Louis Kriel. He described the farm as one with an excellent export quality track record. "And it's our intention to sustain this. Therefore, we'll engage with the beneficiaries to ensure the necessary skills transfer for the business to remain a profitable, world-class citrus export concern."

Capespan has been exporting citrus from Rooigras, which is situated near Komatipoort in Mpumalanga, South Africa, for a number of years. The farm has 350 ha of citrus orchards (168 000 trees).

Rooigras fruit is known for its good external appearance, colour and fruit size. The farm's export pack-out has increased over the years, as well as the proportion of fruit sent to Japan. In 2008, more than 640 000 cartons were exported, of which nearly 300 000 went to Japan. The estimate for this season is almost 650 000 cartons. Sugar cane will remain a substantial part of the farming.

With Jaco Snyman as operational manager, Capespan has retained management and all 130 permanent workers.

Kriel concluded, "It's important for Capespan to secure farms such as Rooigras to guarantee sustained delivery to our valued customers."

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