



Press Release: Fruit Industry Gears Up for a Productive Export Season

Paarl, 8 November 2024 — Transnet's Cape Town Terminals, including both the Cape Town Container Terminal (CTCT) and the Cape Town Multi-Purpose Terminal (CTMPT), are preparing for a successful deciduous fruit export season with a fleet boost of over 70 pieces of additional equipment and the appointment of more operators.

This strategic investment is intended to improve efficiency and streamline the export of table grapes, peaches, apricots, nectarines, plums, and cherries to international markets. Apple and pear harvests, starting in January, will continue exports throughout the year.

Last season about 80% of all deciduous fruit exports from South Africa was shipped from the Port of Cape Town.

Fruit Industry Collaboration and Transparent Engagement

Fruit industry leaders have welcomed the transparent and productive engagement facilitated by Transnet's local and national management, which marks a collaborative turning point. The progress made to date to enhance infrastructure and machinery availability at the Port of Cape Town and Transnet's commitment to continuing this progress is encouraging. However, industry representatives caution that the impact of these improvements would only fully materialise over the medium to long term.

The fruit industry has also been engaging with the Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr Ivan Meyer. The industry appreciates the support from the Western Cape government in taking a solutions-driven approach to solving lingering challenges at the Port of Cape Town.

The fruit industry said the reality was that growers, exporters, and logistical service providers should still be ready to respond to challenges that may arise during the export season. This could include implementing the use of alternative modes of shipping or shipping routes to alleviate the pressure on the Cape Town Container Terminal, to facilitate fruit reaching markets in the



shortest possible time in the interest of servicing of clients, meeting programme deadlines, and ensuring quality fruit upon arrival.

Shipping lines have announced the addition of sailing routes this season. This could play an important part in alleviating the pressure on Cape Town Container Terminal during peak export weeks. In addition, alternative shipping methods, such as Specialised Reefer Vessels, may again need to be utilised from December 2024 to April 2025. These options come with added costs but, are some of the most effective methods available to industry to mitigate risk.

Over the past few seasons, growers have suffered financially largely due to conditions beyond their direct control, including rising input costs, loadshedding and challenges at the port. While it is encouraging to see the progress made at the Port of Cape Town due to collaboration between industry and the Transnet since last season, it will take time for the plans and actions already undertaken to filter down to ground and orchard level.

The fruit industry said they have realistic expectations about the coming season. Whilst challenges such as equipment breakdowns, staffing issues and adverse weather conditions may arise, industry appreciates the efforts, planning, equipment and replacement resource allocation plans made by Transnet. Collaboration between Transnet and the fruit industry is ongoing with clear and achievable objectives.

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