

# FRESH NOTES

A TECHNICAL UPDATE PUBLISHED BY HORTGRO SCIENCE



**PACKHOUSE**  
**ACTION GROUP**

## Fresh Notes feedback of a Packhouse Action Group (PAG) meeting held on 3 November 2022

Contact details are listed at the bottom of the Fresh Notes.

### Feedback on visits to PAG quick link on the Hortgro website

Contact: Elise-Marie Steenkamp

These were the top downloads:

- ▶ [CA Manual Revised \(31 January 2019\)](#) 77 downloads
- ▶ [Fresh Notes 182 - PAG Feedback \(November 20\)](#) 76 downloads
- ▶ [Container Handling Procedures](#) 75 downloads
- ▶ [Jaco Visagie - Trends in Container Technology and Supply](#) 66 downloads
- ▶ [Fresh Notes 186 - PAG Feedback \(March 21\)](#) 62 downloads

For the period August to October, the site had:

- ▶ 114 page views of which 102 were unique page views.
- ▶ This page has a bounce rate of 74,19% .
- ▶ We also have a 03:49 minute average page view for the PAG.
- ▶ In comparison the other Hortgro page views average is 2 minutes.

This page still performs well. The average page view has increased. The bounce rate has increased by 11,85%, which is a bit high. The bounce rate indicates that most people specifically search for this page and stay on it, rather than find it by chance and leave soon after to go view another page on the site.

**Collaboration on Sustainable Cold Chain Project** Contact: Dr Frederic Isingizwe (fisingizwe@uwc.ac.za)

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The project Aim: - Optimize cold chain operations and Improve outcomes on quality, safety and reduction of losses

Objectives: - Implement a web of networked sensors to acquire data on the environment, storage conditions, quality attributes, handling processes, logistic operations and losses. - Develop data-driven models that capture the interactions between the various cold chain aspects to help improve efficiencies, enhance quality assurance and safety and identify areas of improvement. deployed on low power electronic modules and single board computers.

Offers:

1. The opportunity to test a state-of-the-art real-time monitoring solution (by Muddy Boots): a. Clarity on own system for potential improvements b. Visualization dashboards c. Access to your data
2. Standalone system and guidance on integration for adoption
3. Access to first product comprehensive monitoring Muddy Boots

Needed:

We hope you can offer any of the following to allow us to conduct the research:

1. Access to your facilities for sensors placement
2. Historical data for validation
3. Follow up on outcomes (time)
4. From now until end of 2023
5. How and when from farm to market (map/summary of activities)

## Update on Logistics Chain Efficiencies

Contact: Jacques du Preez

Currently operations at the Cape Town Port are on-track and progressing *relatively* smoothly (weather permitting), but the large volumes are on the horizon. Discussions are ongoing with the Transnet management at both strategic and operational levels. The financial impact of the delays encountered earlier this year is now evident in the poor prices received and quality claims. Planning for the current season had its ups and downs, but we are hopeful for a much-improved service, specifically from the container terminal.

We are far from the ideal situation but according to information supplied by Transnet Port Terminals and Transnet National Ports Authority we will hopefully return to a "normal" shipping schedule. Global shipping is also slowly returning to its former status, but this will take a couple of years to completely recover. Shipping rates are also decreasing, but still very high. The decrease in reefer container rates slower than that for dry cargo.

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The following operational plans have been communicated by Transnet:

## Equipment

- A 9th Crane was repositioned from Durban to Cape Town (Done).
- Increase the fleet of RTGs (Rubber Tyred Gantry Cranes) to 24 (Nov 2022) – Oct goal not reached.
- Increase the fleet of haulers to 49, and 7 more will be brought in from PE (Done).
- 3 Mobile cranes available at the Multi-Purpose Terminal (Done).
- Spare parts/Contracts (Awarded).
- Technical support (Awarded).
- Second set of shore tensioners (Done).

## Systems & Processes

- Permanent 7x gangs (teams) / 8 x cranes to be deployed, as and when, to recover after delays (Done).
- 2 x lanes dedicated for reefers (Done).
- An additional 200 plug points have been added at CTCT, bringing the total to 3 200 (Nov 2022).
- Plug points: 100 are available at Belcon.
- Truck staging areas: Phase 1 at MPT (Done), Phase 2 at CTCT (Nov 2022).

## Industry collaboration

- Flexibility in the truck booking system being explored. This continues to be a struggle.
- A commercial operator was awarded the contract to operate a depot at Belcon.
- A night run project is currently underway with the intention of utilising the night shift at the port. **Industry will HAVE to make use of the night runs.** This is a collaborative effort to increase efficiency in the port and industry will need to commit as well.
- Stack openings: Industry must make optimal use of the stack dates from opening and not rush containers into the stack in the last two days.

## Others

- The utilisation of freight rail is being investigated, with talks between exporters and TFR ongoing. This is being explored as a medium to long-term initiative.
- Deliberate initiatives to increase information sharing and coordination amongst industry stakeholders along the value chain are underway.
- Transnet committed to have staff to work on public holidays during the deciduous season. Industry must commit and make use of this service.
- Transnet engaging shipping lines with contract negotiations to bring back vessels to Cape Town, for certain markets like Africa and the East, currently omitting.
- Readiness of tug-, pilot-, workboats being addressed.

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If all the above are implemented successfully we can expect a much-improved season from a logistical perspective.

## **Container Efficiency Testing**      Contact: Bernard Henning

The Packhouse Action Group (PAG) has discussed the issue of container performance over a long period of time. Members have noted that there is a variation in container performance, which can have a detrimental effect on fruit quality. This can be due to several factors, including the age of the container, the cooling unit or damage to the container structure. The latter reason may result in moisture accumulating in the insulation material, thereby reducing insulating capacity. This further results in an increase in the tare mass.

The PAG has requested the PPECB to conduct container efficiency tests over a time period to categorise containers according to their efficiency of removing the heat of respiration.

## **Plastics Strategy**      Contact: Dr Malcolm Dodd / Bryce McIntyre

The plastic matrix, originally drawn up by Tesco, and which indicates the desirability of plastic materials used in packaging with green, amber or red categories, is currently being updated. The revised document will be circulated.

## **Fire Risk Project**      Contact: Koos Bouwer

A fire risk guideline has been drawn up and is currently under review. The report will be circulated when finalised.

## **Market Access Feedback**      Contact: Jacques du Preez / Lindi Benic

Special markets: China, Mexico, Taiwan, USA, Kenya

All the special markets invitations have been sent to the applicable countries for 2023. Taiwan is the priority to not have a repeat of the 2022 break in exports. The Taiwanese inspector has been requested to come to SA much earlier to ensure a smooth season.

### **Market Access:**

China

All three packaging option trial containers arrived and were cleared (shrouds, gauze stickers, cartons with no holes). A bulk order of shrouds has been placed by Hortgro, with exporters purchasing these from Hortgro. Once orders get traction it will be transferred to the supplier for direct purchases.

India (in-transit cold treatment)

In-transit cold treatment is now fully utilised.

Both apple and pear exports to India have reached record volumes this year.

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The drug smuggling using fruit as a vehicle is however a concern, although of course a criminal offense with no direct links to the SA fruit industry.

## Problems

### Taiwan

The top priority is to avoid at all costs a repeat of the 2022 break in exports. The Taiwanese inspector has been requested to come to SA much earlier to ensure a smooth season. DALRRD has done their inspections much earlier as well. There will be a zero tolerance of non-complying PUC's or PHC's. Phytosanitary training material have been developed by Hortgro with training sessions scheduled for packhouses during Dec 2022 and Jan 2023.

### Thailand

A meeting was held in Bangkok with the SA Embassy which proved to be very disappointing with no good news on progress regarding expediting the apple access process. Other options will need be explored for the process to gain traction and momentum. The unstable political situation is not helping the case either.

We are in the process of identifying and contracting a person in Thailand to facilitate/drive the process of regaining access for apples and pears to this market. We are looking for somebody who understands the market access application process, has good knowledge of the Thai government processes, and also knows who the right people in the appropriate government departments are to engage to expedite the process of regaining access for pome fruit.

Hortgro will drive the process from a technical, science and phytosanitary side, but we need somebody to oil the wheels for us on the Thai side.

## Others

### Mexico

Since apple exports to Mexico resumed a couple of years ago, no pears have been shipped. Technically the protocol speaks to apples and pears, but since there haven't been any pear shipments, Mexico informed us that an in-person inspection will have to be done before shipments can be made, which renders this option impossible this year. This information was relayed as there was interest to ship pears this season. An official request was sent requesting in-transit cold treatment, but this was denied by Mexico.

*An official request regarding the fumigation option has been sent.*

### Philippines

The table grape inspection is hopefully taking place January 2023. Once completed apples and pears are next in line for the market access process.

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## Basic Fruit Knowledge Training Contact: Johan Strydom

Johan Strydom has set up a basic fruit knowledge training programme for new entrants to the industry, junior staff, and non-technical staff. The training modules cover several fruit kinds and cold chain procedures. With sessions lasting about 2 hours, the idea is to convey the urgency necessary in exporting fruit and to understand consequences when the cold chain is not maintained.

### PAG Disciplines and Coordinators

*Please contact the relevant person if you have any queries regarding the PAG.*

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