

Press release: 8 September 2023

## **Hortgro welcomes Transnet's efforts**

Hortgro, the South African deciduous fruit industry organization, welcomes the commitment of Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) to address problems at the Port of Cape Town.

This follows a meeting that was held in Paarl last week between TPT and fruit industry stakeholders. TPT said that they are working on contingency plans to ensure that the upcoming fruit export season runs smoother than in recent years given plans to ensure that equipment failure is prevented, whilst pro-active maintenance contracts and inventory of spares have been put in place. TPT is confident that equipment breakdowns will be addressed more quickly given that mechanics and spares will be on site.

The deciduous fruit export season starts in November and lasts until May with peak export weeks expected from week 52 to week 10. It is considered one of the busiest times for the Cape Town Terminal.

"We welcome their commitment, but the proof will be in the pudding," said Hortgro Executive Director, Anton Rabe. "We will, as in the past, work together with TPT and proactively share information and meet regularly to monitor events and to prevent bottlenecks and other problems in a pro-active manner." He added that many producers and logistical service providers have experienced severe financial losses in recent years due to port congestion. "This cannot happen again, and we will hold Transnet accountable for service delivery."

According to TPT, the Cape container yard exported 183 430 standard-sized containers during the past deciduous fruit season. This year, growth of 21% is expected and the container yard will need to handle more than 220,000 refrigerated fruit containers.

A Western Cape government study about problems at the Cape Town Port indicated that in addition to bad weather and wind delays, the way trucks accessed the port was problematic as well as container handling equipment breaking down.

Problems with rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTG) have also been identified as a contributing factor. TPT said in a letter that 13 RTG's are currently available, with seven new ones on order that will be

delivered by mid-November. When the season starts there will be 28 operating RTG's. RTG's are essential equipment and are used to move containers from container piles or from trucks.

Earlier this year stone fruit producers said that they will dump their rotten fruit at the Cape Terminal in protest to poor service delivery. Hundreds of container trucks queued for hours to download fruit. Stone fruit, specifically, is a sensitive product and quality is severely affected if the cold chain is not maintained.

For more information contact: [info@hortgro.co.za](mailto:info@hortgro.co.za)