

Logistics and the deciduous fruit export season

Joint statement by Transnet & Deciduous Fruit Industry

The various fruit industry bodies (Hortgro SATI and FPEF), together with Transnet, continue to engage both at a strategic and operational level, specifically relating to the Port of Cape Town (PoCT) as the deciduous fruit export season ramps up.

Meetings continue on a weekly basis in order to exchange information on expected fruit flows and status of port operations throughout the season, but specifically during the peak of the stone fruit, table grape and early pear season.

While the deciduous fruit industry is concerned about the physical flow of product through the PoCT in the coming season at the most recent engagement, Transnet management committed to better planning, sourcing additional equipment, on-site maintenance capacity and increasing availability of spares. Transnet (TNPA, CTCT and CTMPT) furthermore, shared progress on their respective readiness plans and listed several items on which they would welcome industry assistance. The feedback included:

- TNPA presented its 8-point plan to improve efficiencies in the Port of Cape Town. TNPA provided updates on the 8 focus areas which includes: optimising the port as a delivery platform, combating adverse weather conditions, improving truck operations, optimising marine services, improving information sharing and port operations visibility, terminal equipment & port infrastructure, people management, and managing the immediate crisis. Specific updates were provided on the acquisition of the 16 additional shore tension units & the delivery thereof, the dredging of the CTCT berths, marine craft availability, shift rostering over the festive season, and the provision of credible port related operational information.
- CTCT and CTMPT reported on the number and availability of gangs and equipment, plug-points, plans for reefer and truck staging, gate shifts, the truck booking system, night runs and the use of the Belcon inland terminal, and reverting to a 3-berth operation at CTCT and a 2-berth operation at CTMPT.

We are hopeful that these interventions and plans will make a difference in the coming months and that we will experience logistical improvements. Industry also agreed to investigate mechanisms to contract and second maintenance capacity (mechanics and millwrights), and to investigate ways to fast-track the procurement of key pieces of equipment which is urgently required. The cost and contractual arrangements for Transnet to use and reimburse such procured equipment, still need to be resolved.

- *Jointly issued by Transnet, Hortgro, SATI and FPEF*