



KEEPING IT FRESH



News from the FPEF – 25 October 2023

Dear FPEF Members,

Prior to Covid we were accustomed to an increase in international travel at this time of the year, and it seems that we are now back to that pattern again (maybe the **Rugby World Cup in France** also contributes to it). 😊 **Go Bokke!**

Apart from the usual travels to attend **Fruit Attraction** in Madrid, the **IFPA** (previously known as the PMA) event in the USA, and the **Agri-Link** trade show in the Philippines, we are doing more market access visits to especially the new markets which we want to gain access to.



So far, we have visited **Vietnam, Japan, South Korea** as well as existing markets in **Europe** and the **UK**. The next visits in November will be to **China** and **India**. As was communicated earlier, we are glad that a senior official of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (**DALRRD**) leads the small industry delegation for official meetings with his counterparts in those markets. We are aware of the government's financial constraints and therefore we carry the cost of the official on these visits as we have seen that his presence makes an important difference.

As we realise that our continued focus and efforts in gaining access to new markets should continue, we also stay involved in trying to find solutions for the logistical challenges, especially the ports.

You will read more about it in the rest of this newsletter.

FINANCIAL MATTERS – ANNUAL MEMBER DECLARATION OF VOLUMES EXPORTED

A big **thank you** to all our members who have already submitted their declarations.

Members have until **Friday, 3rd of November** to submit their declarations. Any questions/queries related to this request may be directed to **Marinda Roux** marinda@fpef.co.za.

Your assistance and co-operation with this exercise is much appreciated.



Market Access
Provide Information

Government Engagement
Transformation

Export process assistance
Research, Development and Innovation

TRANSFORMATION

On the 12th of October the FPEF and Fruitworks hosted a networking lunch for all the graduates appointed to the industry through the FPEF's graduate placement programme.

The primary purpose of the lunch was to create an opportunity for graduates to network with industry colleagues in an informal, social environment.

The atmosphere at the lunch was festive, with the air filled with conversation, laughter, and music. Music was provided by a Karoo Jazz Band from the Prince Albert Community Trust, who are supported by Fruitworks.



The following link has a short video which captured the essence of the event:

<https://youtu.be/Z2uT15LSPmk>

During the event, two of the graduates shared the impact that the programme has had on their lives and careers:

Tumelo Thulari, who is a Logistics Co-ordinator at **C-Fruit** in Stellenbosch said the following:

"I can't emphasize enough how transformative and beneficial this experience was for my career. This program not only provided me with invaluable skills and knowledge but also opened my eyes to the vast potential within the fresh produce export industry I strongly encourage other companies to participate in similar internship programs and hire more graduates in the fresh produce export industry."

Mpho Malebati, a Quality Controller at **Cape Five Fruit Export** shared the following,

"The Fresh Produce Exporters Forum has been a game-changer in my life. It has given me the opportunity to learn and grow in this industry This journey has led me to the collaboration with Cape Five Export on a Masters project, which is addressing the quality issues that the company is experiencing. This study has set the course for my career in a direction I am passionate about."

FPEF members interested in finding out more about the graduate placement programme can contact **Johannes Brand** at johannes@fpf.co.za.

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

Export Directory 2024

The FPEF Export Directory is compiled and distributed by the FPEF on an annual basis, and includes details of FPEF members, statistics of the previous fruit and vegetable seasons and other relevant information on the South African fresh fruit and vegetable industry. **FPEF members are invited to advertise in the Export Directory for 2024.** If you are interested in booking an advertisement in the directory, please contact **Marletta Kellerman** via email at marletta@fpef.co.za by **27 October 2023**.

LOGISTICS & OPERATIONS

Ports

Transnet and Shipping lines continued recovery plan discussions for container terminals where low equipment availability and weather delays resulted in increased berthing delays. Among the items discussed were tightening controls on operational agreements and providing regular equipment updates per terminal. Tim Keit committed to share an overview of the recovery plan in due course. While recruitment for senior management is underway, the board met with Unions and staff and SATAWU has since announced it will organize protest marches around the country.

Transnet cancelled the rail contract with Traxion Sheltam which emerged as the successful bidder late last year to operate the Kroonstad to East London railway line. It was the only bid for the Cape Corridor and according to Transnet the contract was ended by mutual agreement. Transnet indicated that negotiations to work out the mechanisms for its participation proved challenging. On the Durban-Johannesburg container route, slots were auctioned off, but no bidders were successful.

Through Agbiz, FPEF gave input to the logistics roadmap, while most of the document focused on rail, it acknowledges the need for change and a high-level overview of targeted areas the main concern is the organizations' ability to execute and maintain the changes.

Markets

The industry has increased the standard for fruit quality. This is the single most distinguishing characteristic of South African fresh produce compared to our competition in the Southern Hemisphere.

Fortunately, research and development into best production practices, the re-evaluation of quality throughout the production phase of our deciduous fruit, and the abundance of sunny days in the South African summer enable us to move the needle on further consumption growth.



The FPEF recently met with European retailers in anticipation of the deciduous fruit export season. One word sums up the golden thread from multiple retailers: **quality**. If the quality of our first South African fruit exported falls short of expectations, consumers will lose interest for the remainder of the season, negatively impacting sales. This is especially true for stone fruit, yet a cross cutting aspect in any fresh produce category.

It was reported that the sustainability of fresh products shipped by airfreight will be reviewed more closely by retailers. Worker welfare and ethical trade compliance remain critical sustainability components for most retailers. There is an expectation from some retailers to source from their preferred supplier, South Africa, however, consistent, and reliable supply will remain critical for this season.

FPEF AGM: SAVE THE DATE

By now you would have received the **notice of the FPEF AGM** taking place as follows:



DATE: Thursday, 23 November 2023
TIME: 11h00
VENUE: Glen Carlou Vineyards, R45, Simondium Road, Klapmuts
SPEAKER: Dawie Roodt – Director and Chief Economist of the Efficient Group

Please note that **space is limited**, and calendar invites will only be sent to those delegates that responded they will be attending the AGM in person.

Kindly RSVP your attendance to claudia@fpef.co.za, by clicking on and completing the form below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/bxiMsGrVyZ>

As you are aware we have established (and co-fund) a **Fruit Desk** at **Agbiz** to focus on policy matters. We have seen its value in trade negotiations which impact our industry, as well as to ensure that our “voice is heard” in forums and meetings. The latest is the current AGOA negotiations.

Our industry’s umbrella organisation, **Fruit South Africa**, has been in existence for **10 years** now and a small celebration will take place next week which will be attended by our Chairman (**Mark Jensen**) and myself. At this stage, I am the **Chairman of Fruit South Africa** and will thus be wearing two hats at the event. Feedback will be given in the next edition of the Keeping it Fresh.



At this stage, we convey our congratulations to the Fruit SA team.

Until next time,

Anton Kruger



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