



KEEPING IT FRESH

fpef
fresh produce
EXPORTERS' FORUM
SOUTH AFRICA

News from the FPEF – 01 July 2021

Dear FPEF Members,

Herewith, another edition of our newsletter in which we bring you a summary of the services provided to you as our members during the past two weeks (which, in some instances also include events in future of which you need to be aware of).

ALERT LEVEL
4

Due to a massive surge of new infections, South Africa will be placed on
ADJUSTED ALERT LEVEL 4 FROM MONDAY, 28 JUNE

WORKING FROM HOME:

- All employers should allow their employees to work from home unless it is absolutely necessary for them to perform work on-site

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The most important recent development is that the country is back on Covid-19 Alert Level 4 – which emphasises the importance of all of us adhering to the protocols of sanitising, wearing of masks, social distancing and revised curfew hours (21:00 to 04:00). The rapid rise in infections is cause for concern with regards to our industry as the risks of disruptions of export processes due to potential infections (and thus absence from work). We have engaged the relevant authorities who will put contingency plans in place – as far as possible.

Another looming risk is a potential strike by Government and Transnet employees about a wage dispute and we are busy, via Agbiz, to address it in order to have contingency plans in place.

In the regulatory environment, the **high-cube transport issue** has not been resolved and the dispensation/“moratorium” granted to allow vehicles exceeding a height of 4,3 m lapsed yesterday (30 June). Engagements and negotiations on Ministerial level are continuing to resolve the matter.

Another important development with regards to legal compliance is the **Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)** which comes into force today, 01 July. You can read the FPEF’s policy in this regard by clicking on the link below and which is also available on our website (www.fpef.co.za):

<https://www.fpef.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FPEF-Privacy-Policy.pdf>

We have also sent the FPEF’s POPIA Manual to you via e-mail.



The efficiency of the ports remains a risk and in this regard, high-level interactions are also continuing. Our Operational Manager, Werner van Rooyen, did an excellent presentation on the issues and the impact thereof, during a meeting with the Transnet CEO in Groblersdal where she (and her Executive team) was exposed to the value chain of fresh fruit exports. An important development with regards to the ports is the separation of the Transnet Ports Authority (TNPA) and the Port Operator, Transnet Port Terminals (TPT). One of the big advantages of this is that the fees paid to TPT will now go to TPT where it can be used for equipment maintenance, upgrading of equipment and other necessary improvements. As an industry, we have been asking for this separation for quite a number of years.

FRUIT ATTRACTION MADRID 2021

We wish to inform you that the *Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum* has decided not to attend *Fruit Attraction 2021* physically.

The main reasons for our decision are:

- Since the highly contagious Delta variant has been detected in South Africa, coupled with the slow rate of vaccinations in South Africa, we are not sure if we will be allowed to travel to Europe.
- The strong possibility of isolation requirements on arrival in Spain.
- Strict regulations at the IFEMA venue will make it difficult to exhibit and interact with visitors; for example, limitations of one person per 2,5 m² on a stand, strict social distancing, screens on the stands and the sanitising of marketing material.
- The organisers require that we pay a deposit of 50% now and the full amount by 30 August, but given all the uncertainties, it is prudent to not incur such an expense at this stage.



We will explore the online options.

WESGRO EXPORT UNIT WEBINAR

Wesgro hosted a webinar on the 28th of June with the topic: *The impact of COVID on the Western Cape exports and how the Wesgro Export Unit can assist with market access.*

The presentation was sent to all members on the 29th of June and once the editing is done, the webinar recording will be posted on the Wesgro website (<https://www.wesgro.co.za/corporate/events>).

Should you have any questions you are welcome to contact Nadine Smith-Clarke at Wesgro (Nadine@wesgro.co.za).

CELEBRATION OF FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN CITRUS OF THE SEASON IN ST PETERSBURG

The Russia-RSA Business Council and the South African Embassy in Moscow hosted an event on the 18th of May in St Petersburg to celebrate the arrival of the first South African citrus of the year in Russia. Each year this event is organized to promote South African fruit in Russia. The event and the offloading of the first fruit was covered by TV BRICS.

Please see the link of the event:

<https://tvbrics.com/en/tv-shows/brics-inform/show/from-south-africa-to-st-petersburg-fruit-season-2021/>

TRANSFORMATION

In recent years the FPEF, assisted by its members, provided pre-trip training and helped with arrangements for black fruit farmers funded by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WC DoA) to attend Berlin Fruit Logistica. As this year's Fruit Logistica was cancelled due to Covid, the FPEF arranged a two-day local tour on the 9th and 10th of June, for a group of 14 black fruit farmers from the Western Cape and 4 WC DoA officials, in collaboration with the WC DoA. On day one the group was hosted by the PPECB and visited a cold store and container depot. On day two the group visited the Epping fresh produce market, GoReefers Logistics and Capespan. The purpose of the visit was to provide the growers with first-hand exposure to elements of the value chain beyond the farm gate. The FPEF would like to extend special thanks to Jan Visser of the PPECB, Adrian de Villiers of the Cape Town Market, Derick Robertson of GoReefers and Gerald Gant of Capespan, who generously gave of their time to make the visits possible.

THE PHI PROGRAMME

The programme is currently in its fourth phase of three years and is co-funded by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the industry. We will share information on some of the projects with you from time to time – and here is an example:

SMARTER PACKAGING IMPROVES VENTILATION IN CONTAINERISED CITRUS EXPORTS

The volume of citrus fruit exported from South Africa under cold sterilisation conditions has increased over recent years, resulting in pressure on the limited pre-cooling facilities at local ports. The fact that more citrus is being exported than the pre-cooling capacity available, leaves the industry with a logistical headache.

Left with few options, exporters have resorted to loading palatised fruit at ambient temperature into refrigerated containers. These containers are equipped to remove the field heat and cool the fruit over a period of two to three days. However, it can take up to 5 days before the set point temperature of <2 degrees Celsius, required by the cold sterilisation protocol, is reached.

This is because packaging materials are highly resistant to airflow and do not allow adequate cold air to reach all the fruit, resulting in relatively large variations in the cooling performance (rate and uniformity).

Findings

- The survey results showed that 85% of SA citrus exporters primarily use A15C, E15D and E10D cartons.
- Open-top cartons cooled substantially slower than the A15C.
- Cross-stacking caused severe restrictions where carton layers meet which more than tripled the resistance to airflow.
- Optimising the pallet base to improve ventilation is only beneficial when the rest of the pallet is optimised.
- Non-obstructive securing sheets reduced resistance to airflow by 45% and 18% for the E10D and E15D, respectively.
- Based on the research results, container cooling can be improved by enlarging ventilation openings (not applicable to A15C), and redesigning securing sheets to be non-obstructive.
- -Two potential solutions for the A15C cartons, are a column-stacking approach, or repositioning vent holes along a 100 mm grid for improved alignment.



More information on these exciting projects will be shared in future editions of *Keeping it Fresh*.

MARKET ACCESS AND TECHNICAL MATTERS

Citrus exports to the Philippines:

We are still experiencing challenges with importers in the Philippines unable to receive an import permit and are addressing it continuously via DALRRD with the Philippine authorities.

China:

Lemons: The South African Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has signed the protocol, which was then couriered to China (on request of the Chinese authorities) for the Chinese Minister to sign. As soon as he has signed, implementation can start.

Logistics:

We are seeing cases where shipping is disrupted due to shipping crews being affected by Covid with some ports then not allowing the vessels to berth. In such cases we are trying to find a solution via DALRRD and diplomatic/political channels.

Herewith, a **summary of the rules and regulations** which have been published in the Government Gazette recently:

<i>Adjusted alert Level 4</i>	<u>Alert level 4 adjusted lockdown regulations</u>
<i>Alert Level 4 amended lockdown regulations</i>	<u>Alert level 4 lockdown regulations amendment</u>

Please stay safe!

***Kind regards,
Anton Kruger***

