



KEEPING IT FRESH

fpef
fresh produce
EXPORTERS' FORUM
SOUTH AFRICA

News from the FPEF – 25 August 2021

Dear FPEF Members,

Welcome to another edition of our newsletter in which we bring you summarised versions of the most important matters with which we have dealt with during the past two weeks. It seems that the challenges are getting more, but we keep on engaging with the relevant people who are able to find solutions. In order to be able to utilise our resources optimally, we need to focus on those matters which we can influence.

Well done to our Project Manager, **Junette Davids** and Accountant, **Marinda Roux** for successfully managing a Private/Public Partnership programme of R30 million in each phase. More detail about the PHI programme can be found on page three of this newsletter.



CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to **Theo Boshoff** who has been appointed as CEO Designate at Agbiz due to Mr John Purchase's retirement at the end of this year. We wish him well in his new role and look forward to building on the good relationship we already have with Agbiz.

HIGH CUBE CONTAINER STATUS

The high cube container status remains the same, without any indication from the Department of Transport on the extension of the moratorium. A newly formed task team meeting with a smaller grouping (of which FPEF is part of) will meet on 31 August. The issue was highlighted with the DTIC to support industry on this matter.

PHILIPPINES IMPORT PERMITS FOR CITRUS

The matter remains a concern and some exporters' importing clients have not yet been successful in obtaining an import permit. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has, once again, submitted a written explanation, highlighting technical aspects of concern with the South African registration process. The DALRRD has requested a virtual meeting with the Philippines Bureau of Plant Inspection (BPI), however, the BPI has rejected the request for a meeting. We continue to follow up via FruitSA and the embassy for a resolution.

TRANSNET, SHIPPING AND SUPPLY CHAIN

The weekly Transnet meetings are continuing following the replacement of these meetings for more frequent discussion between supply chain stakeholders. In last weeks' meeting, stakeholders reported challenges with the availability of empty reefer containers. Also reported was delays in the processes guiding the release of empty reefer containers in the supply chain. Meetings between the FPEF, CGA and shipping line partners took place to understand the impact of the macro-economic environment on container demand, supply and trade in general and specifically the impact on national ports in South Africa. Allocation of empty containers to South Africa are exceeding YTD volumes versus last year YTD. We are working jointly with the collaboration of your shipping line partners to ensure sufficient supply of empty reefer containers for the RSA fruit industry. Availability of empty reefer containers for the upcoming deciduous fruit season is no different and formed part of our discussions during these meetings. Much attention is given to ensure sufficient allocation of empty reefer containers for the upcoming table grape season.



Another concern is the amount of time vessels spend on the South African coast before sailing from South Africa. Since the Transnet cyber-attack and KZN unrest, vessels are spending a significant amount of time at the various South African ports, way above the average or acceptable time, before sailing towards the next port of call. The situation remains a concern and we are monitoring these vessels to identify potential disruptions in the supply chain.

With all the supply chain challenges this year, stock was also accumulating in the supply chain, causing citrus fruit age to increase. Complying to the permissible age of citrus fruit according to the APS act became a real threat. The FPEF provided, until recently, updated information on the citrus fruit age stock profile and motivations for implementing measures such as citrus fruit age dispensation, to alleviate supply chain blockages and avoid non-compliance. FPEF successfully engaged DALRRD: FSQA granting dispensations. PPECB formed an integral part in providing information from pack house stock levels. It is a source of tremendous pride and gratitude to see business and government working together to assist our exporters during these extraordinary times.

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

BRICS India Trade Fair 2021

This virtual trade fair was hosted from the 16th till the 18th of August. It was the largest platform for companies from across BRICS countries to meet and network with their counterparts. FPEF was an exhibitor with a virtual stand. As this was a multi-product show with nearly 20 focus sectors there were very few enquiries for fresh fruit.



Fruit Logistica Berlin 2022

The dtic invites companies to submit applications to participate in *Fruit Logistica Berlin*, scheduled to take place from 09 – 11 February 2022. The deadline for submission of application forms with supporting documents is 09 September 2021. Applications must be sent only by email to VMbuyisa@thedtic.gov.za. For more information, please refer to the email sent on the 4th of August or contact Marletta Kellerman at marletta@fpef.co.za.

NEWS FROM THE POST-HARVEST INNOVATION PROGRAMME

Between February 2019 and March 2021, Dr Wilma du Plooy from *Citrus Research International* led a study to find a solution to fungal contamination of pallet bases. Although her study was focused on the citrus industry at the outset, similar challenges in other fresh fruit sectors resulted in cooperation from the pome and stone fruit, and table grape industries.



Importation of fresh fruit and vegetables stacked on pallets with mould is an increasingly threatening issue, and exporters are faced with claims, refusals and diversion of consignments.

One of the main questions to answer, was what the source of the fungal contamination was. The study revealed that the storage conditions in the packhouses have no influence on the development of mould on the wood. Instead, pallets themselves, built from wet-off-saw wood, were the source of the contamination. It was found that while pallets built from pine presented with the problem, eucalyptus wood was not affected by mould. While using a different wood source might appear to be the solution, the availability of pine for pallet manufacturing far exceeds that of eucalyptus. For more information about the study please contact Ms Junette Davids at junette@fpf.co.za.

It is heartening to have received the message below from one of the independent members of the Steering Committee of the PHI (Post-harvest Innovation) programme, **Dr Marius Huysamer**:

Dear FPEF team and DSI team

Covid-19 disruptions notwithstanding, I think progress with the PHI-4 programme has been outstanding. This latest update reflects a commitment to the programme that is very heartening. A lot of the credit has to go to the various researchers/institutions that made massive adjustments to their way of doing business, but I want to specifically thank the FPEF team for their exceptional management of the programme. One reads, daily, of corruption and mismanagement of taxpayers' funds and even more so than usual with the disrupted finance management systems under Covid regulations. It is therefore very gratifying to be involved in a public/private initiative that is so well managed. DSI has stood by this programme through four iterations and in my involvement with three of them I've been nothing but highly impressed by the calibre of people representing DST/DSI. This is a partnership worth bragging about, so thanks to all of you for your contributions!

On this positive note, keep well and stay safe!

***Kind regards,
Anton Kruger***

FPEF TRANSFORMATION WEBINAR

**Wednesday 15 September
10h00 - 12h00**

FREE

Join us on Zoom for a focused, interactive 2 hour session to challenge and inspire you towards playing an active role in furthering positive and effective transformation in your business.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Aimed at business leaders within the fresh produce export value chain.

SPEAKERS

- **Matome Ramokgopa** - Matome is at the forefront of bridging the gap between the international agricultural community and local farmers in his position as the General Manager of Enza Zaden South Africa, whose parent company is based in the Netherlands.
- **Gerald Gant** - Gerald needs no introduction to most of you, having served as the MD for Dole South Africa for 19 years. He is an industry veteran with a wealth of experience and insight.

**BOOK NOW - RSVP to johannes@fpf.co.za
to book your spot and we will send you the Zoom link.**

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