



KEEPING IT FRESH



News from the FPEF – 19 April 2023

Dear FPEF Members,

In a previous edition of this newsletter, we informed you that you will have the opportunity to get to know our Board members a little better. In this edition, biographical information about **Gary Britz** is being shared. I take this opportunity to thank our Board members once again for serving on the Board (without being remunerated for it). In these challenging times for our industry, the guidance by, and involvement of Board members to try and find solutions, are crucial as they have the real “on-the-ground” experience of how the challenges affect our industry.

TRANSFORMATION NEWS

AgriBEE

The FPEF recently participated in an AgriBEE workshop together with the primary producer organisations under Fruit South Africa, Vinpro, Agbiz, and relevant representatives from DALRRD and the dtic, who are the custodians of the BEE codes. The purpose of the workshop was to unpack challenges with the current AgriBEE codes and to propose solutions. The session was led by Stephen Hobson, a BEE expert with Agrifusion. Key challenges highlighted were policy uncertainty, the high administrative and financial cost of BEE compliance, more onerous targets under the revised codes and the racial breakdown introduced for employment equity (EE) and skills development elements. The key solutions proposed were a recalibration of the targets to incentivise companies to become compliant, revert to black persons and exclude the racial breakdown for EE and skills development, a higher weighting in preferential procurement for companies with a good scorecard (versus primarily recognising companies with majority black ownership) and a recalibration by government as to what they consider an acceptable BEE compliance level. The FPEF will continue to engage in these issues on behalf of its members and our hope is to see improved coordination between the private sector, the BEE Commissioner, the AgriBEE Council, SANAS & verification agents.

Employment Equity Amendment Bill signed into law

The Employment Equity Amendment Bill was signed into law by the President on 12 April 2023. Please see the statement from the Presidency here: [Employment Equity Bill media statement](#). The bill applies to all companies with more than 50 employees regardless of turnover. The Minister of Employment and Labour will determine employee equity targets to be met for each economic sector. The equity targets for agriculture have not been published yet but it is expected that they will be published soon, after which there will be an opportunity to provide comment.



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MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024

the dtic extends an invitation to all exporters of fresh produce to apply to participate in Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024, scheduled to take place from 07 – 09 February 2024 in Berlin, Germany. The deadline for the submission of complete National Pavilion application forms is 07 September 2023 @ 16h00. Applicants need to complete the EMIA application form and submit it VIA E-MAIL ONLY together with the required documents to:

VMbuyisa@thedtic.gov.za / SMtimkulu1@thedtic.gov.za. For any enquiries pertaining to applications please contact Ms. Virginia Mbuyisa / Ms Sizakele Mtimkulu Tel: 012 394-5988 / 012 394 1409.



Export Directory 2023

The Export Directory is also now available in Mandarin, and you can download a copy from the FPEF website, www.fpef.co.za.

LOGISTICS & OPERATIONS

Regulation on Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs

The Department of Health issued a draft regulation relating to the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs (R2986), under the **Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act No.54 of 1972)**. Reference is made to *single ingredient agricultural commodities* which includes fresh fruit and vegetables. Specific reference is also made to vegetable and fruit juice. A revised version of the draft regulation was published on 14 April 2023 with a new due date for comments around mid-July. The application of the draft ruling on exports of fresh products, is currently under investigation.

Electronic Certification

The e-Cert team upgraded their IT servers on 1 April to ensure technology infrastructure remains up-to-date and can continue to support operations effectively. Technical issues have been identified on 03 April and 04 April, as a result of upgrading of the server infrastructure over the weekend. Multiple issues were identified, with the primary issues causing the severe delays, namely: DALRRD officials not able to digitally sign the phytosanitary certificates and issues with submission of electronic certification to the EU. The FPEF identified the largest impact on airfreight consignments and facilitated in the process to resolve these issues. Prioritisation of electronic certification for exporters exporting airfreight consignments was most important, preceding sea freight consignments.

On 13 April, the e-Cert team confirmed resolving the issue of electronic phytosanitary certification submission to the EU. DigiCert experienced issues with their maintenance changes and the team worked around the clock to reprocess these phyto's. Additional measures have been put in place to prevent this incident from occurring again. The e-Cert IT Steering Committee, of which the FPEF is a member, has scheduled an urgent meeting for April 21 to discuss the implementation of process improvement measures, deemed critical to resolve these and other issues.

Logistics

A positive development on the legal restriction of High Cube containers is that the Department of Transport issued a notice granting exemption from complying with the specific rule in the National Road Traffic regulation and punitive measures has been suspended until further notice. Industry organizations will pursue a permanent order.

Today, there are no container vessels at anchor for Cape Town container terminal. FPEF will join a workshop on Friday to discuss the finding of the port congestion study commissioned by the Western Cape Government and together with TPT, TNPA and Industry will progress these recommendations as it remains a challenge for exporters and adds significant cost to the logistics chain.



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As we approach winter and citrus season, ranging will affect port operations in Cape Town container terminal as well as Nquara. The two berths in Cape Town have permanent shore tensioners and TNPA is procuring a third set, covering all three berths in Cape Town. The shore tensioning unit at Nquara is expected to be installed by the end of May.

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: GARY BRITZ

“For me there are three important things: My family, my sport and my work.

I met my wife Suzanne (Adamson) while studying and completing a BSc Agriculture (Hort. Sci.) at the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg in 1985. After completing military service and moving down to Cape Town in 1990 we got married. We have two children Robyn and Jonty.



If I was good enough, I would become a professional runner and not a fruit trader! I love and live for my running. I have completed 11 Comrades marathons, 15 Two Oceans Ultra Marathons, 2 Iron Mans, more than 60 Marathons worldwide and a lot of other road races. The last few years I have lived for trail running and have completed many races and ultras around the country.



Completing the Ultra Trail Drakensberg 2022

I matriculated from Weston Agricultural College in Mooi River Natal and went onto doing a BSc. Agric. Hort. Sci at the University of Natal. My first introduction to the fruit industry was a job at Unifruco in Durbanville between 1990 and 1997. During this time, I completed a Post Graduate Diploma in International Marketing. I was involved in product development and specifically in apples and pears. After de-regulation I joined Multifruit as a commercial manager and in 2000 went to Metspan. Here I gained great knowledge in trading in the Far East markets. In 2005 I became General Manager of EXSA, one of the leading table grape exporters in South Africa. In 2014, after a short period in the company Freshgold, I started the company ELE Trading. This year will be **ELE Trading's** 10th season in the South African fresh produce industry.”



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Best regards
Anton Kruger

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