



**fpef**  
SOUTH AFRICA  
FRESH PRODUCE  
EXPORTERS' FORUM

# *“Keeping it Fresh”*

**News from the FPEF – 25 March 2020**

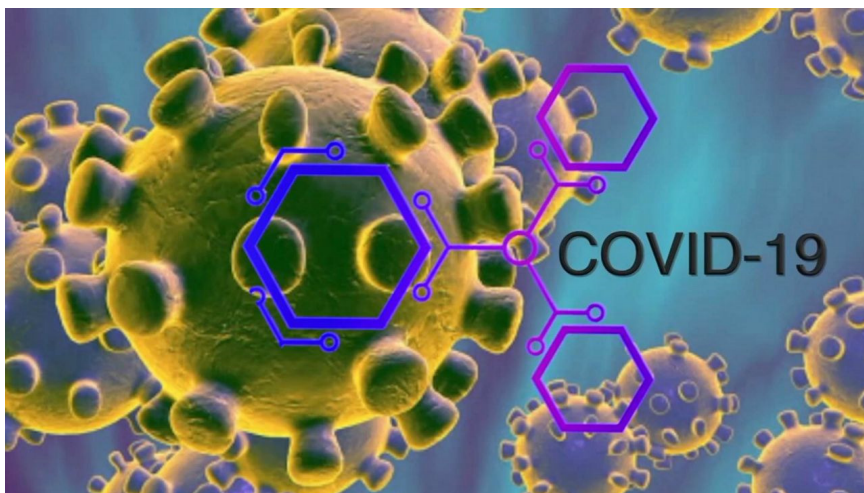
*Dear FPEF members,*

Welcome to this edition of ***Keeping it Fresh*** where we share some of the recent relevant news and developments in a summarized format with you.

As we are all affected by COVID-19, the content of this edition, and future editions, will be dominated by COVID-19 information; some of this information will be directly focused on COVID-19 measures and actions, while other will be more on the impact on the operational side. Due to the ever-changing nature of the COVID-19 situation, we will for the foreseeable future, compile a **weekly** edition of *Keeping it Fresh*.

Some of the latest developments are:

- Establishing a dedicated **COVID-19 Communications Team** to ensure a central and coherent message about our industry in these times. It is of crucial importance that formal communication about COVID-19 be handled by this Team. Individual FPEF members, as well as producers should refrain from making media statements/responding to enquiries by journalists. Such enquiries must please be referred to the leader of the Communications Team, Adèle Ackermann ([adele.ackermann@capspan.co.za](mailto:adele.ackermann@capspan.co.za)).



While mentioning Adèle's e-mail address, it again reinforces the willingness of our members to “wear the industry hat” where things need to be done in the interest of the industry. It is a privilege to be part of such a positive industry. The team not only responds to media enquiries, but also develops messages which are distributed pro-actively to the relevant audiences – an example could be a message to encourage consumers to eat more fresh produce to boost their immune systems.

- On a **strategic level**, the FPEF is involved in various initiatives such as meetings with the National Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (Minister Thoko Didiza), some provincial Governments, the Inter-ministerial Task team where we are represented by Agbiz and other meetings and initiatives as the need for such engagements arises. We are glad that our membership of Agbiz (again) shows its value. President Ramaphosa has declared COVID-19 as a National Disaster on Sunday 15 March and on Monday morning 16 March, we were in a meeting with Minister Didiza in Pretoria together with the associations of other industries. Three Task Teams were established to advise the Minister. Our interests are being dealt with via the Agbiz CEO, Dr John Purchase - with whom we are in constant contact.
- Following the lockdown announced by President Ramaphosa on 23 March, industry leaders met with Minister Didiza on 24 March 2020 in which she explained Government's approach and strategy to tackle the Coronavirus threat. Essentially the whole agro-food system, as also indicated by the Minister in her statement, must continue to operate optimally under the instituted 21-day lockdown. Critically important will be to rapidly identify blockages and breakdowns in any of the multitude of supply chains in our agro-food system, and then respond with speed and appropriate measures to remedy any dysfunctionality.
- We are engaging constantly with **international bodies** of which we are a member, such as **SHAFPE** (Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters) and **FRESHFEL** (The European Fresh Produce Association) - where we share relevant information.
- At this stage, there is **no ban on the export of fresh fruit** from South Africa. Port closures in the receiving countries are only applicable to passengers/humans and not goods
- With regards to the **FPEF's daily operations and staff**, we are mostly working from home – but are available as usual. No international travelling is taking place and domestic travel is kept to only that which is of crucial importance and essential.



Herewith, the contact details of the FPEF team:

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Marletta Kellerman	Marketing Manager	<a href="mailto:marletta@fpéf.co.za">marletta@fpéf.co.za</a>	083 228 8331
Marinda Roux	Accountant	<a href="mailto:marinda@fpéf.co.za">marinda@fpéf.co.za</a>	082 560 1019
Junette Davids	PHI Programme Manager	<a href="mailto:junette@fpéf.co.za">junette@fpéf.co.za</a>	082 409 3825
Kuhle Ndyondya	Intern	<a href="mailto:kuhle@fpéf.co.za">kuhle@fpéf.co.za</a>	084 271 8116
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Claudia Walklett	Professional Assistant	<a href="mailto:claudia@fpéf.co.za">claudia@fpéf.co.za</a>	084 510 1207

- All non-essential meetings of industry bodies and Government have been cancelled and some essential meetings are now **virtual meetings** via tele-conferencing, SKYPE and ZOOM.
- Some international trade shows have already been cancelled or postponed. One of them, where we (as part of Fruit South Africa) would have been a Gold Sponsor (as in the past), is **Fresh Produce: India** which was scheduled for 22 to 24 April in Mumbai.
- Our **Market Access applications** are being impacted on by COVID-19, but the processes are continuing. It seems that digital signing-off on approvals and protocols will be accepted and allowed.
- Various Government departments request information from us on a regular basis in order to assist them with decision making. We will thus contact some of you to provide the necessary information and wish to thank those of you who have already assisted.
- With the lockdown announced by President Ramaphosa on 23 March, a number of questions arose with regards to some operational matters affecting our industry.

The most pertinent are:

- **How do we manage movement of employees, including farmworkers, as they can be stopped by SAPS and other law enforcement agencies?**

Government has not indicated a permit system. Industry has proposed a self-regulating system whereby a letter of authority, signed by the CEO of a company, together with the employee's name and ID number, as well as indicating the essential service/function being fulfilled, is carried by the employee and produced when stopped by a law enforcement official. The telephone number of the Business/Company must also be provided for quick and effective verification. A Commissioner of Oaths should verify each letter.

All movement of farmworkers/packers need to follow the measures announced around social distancing, hand-sanitizing, fever testing, etc., when being transported from their living areas to the workplace. Most businesses have developed and employed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to ensure the health of their workforce and the hygiene integrity of their workplaces.

- **Special market inspections (China, Japan, Taiwan):**
  - Japan agreed to not send an inspector and exporters would be able to export without a pre-clearance inspection from a MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) inspector. However, fruit will be sampled and thoroughly inspected on arrival.
  - The matter of inspectors from China, Taiwan, Korea and the USA is still pending and we await the outcome.
  - **South African ports:** The Port Terminals will operate on a reduced staff basis from 23:59 on 26 March until 23:59 on 16 April. Exporters will thus need to pay close attention to ship calls by port and shipping schedules over the next few weeks. Although Transnet Port operations will prioritise

essential goods, it is important to closely monitor vessel schedules and operations inside the terminal.

○ **PPECB:**

All PPECB Operational offices will remain open, but in some instances, they may operate with a reduced staff complement. All staff members will however be available on their mobile phones and via e-mail. The PPECB have provided emergency contact details of key staff. We have communicated it with you, but in case you need it again, please contact Charlene Scott: 073 804 4319.

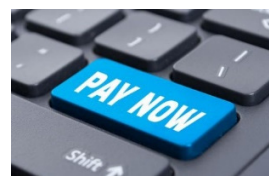
- Relevant information is also published on our website: [www.fpef.co.za](http://www.fpef.co.za) under the News tab.

On the operational side, matters and issues (some COVID-19 related and others not) are still being dealt with to try and minimise the disruptions in the export of fresh produce. Some of them are:

- E-Cert – All plant-based products to be certified via the e-cert system from 01 April – Please use the document circulated by Kuhle today.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES:**

We would like to thank all our members who have paid their membership fees by the due date on 31 January 2020, but there are still a few members who have not yet paid and we would like to appeal to them to pay their membership fees immediately.



We are still engaging with **APAC** (the Agricultural Produce Agents 'Council) regarding the Rules for Export Agents, re-registration and other matters involving our members. A meeting took place with the Registrar on 10 March and we will share the outcome of the meeting with you as soon as we have received official communication from APAC. One important matter which was highlighted again was the necessity for exporters and producers/suppliers to have proper marketing agreements in place. The **Marketing Agreement template** which we have developed is available to you on our website and can also be obtained from Claudia Walklett in our office: [claudia@fpef.co.za](mailto:claudia@fpef.co.za)

Our annual **Fresh Produce Export Directory** is one of our flagship publications. Copies of this year's edition, including the Annual Report were recently shipped to all our members. If you have not received yours as yet, please contact Marletta Kellerman: [marletta@fpef.co.za](mailto:marletta@fpef.co.za).

We have informed you recently about the resignation of the **Fruit South Africa (FSA) CEO**, Konanani Liphadzi. Her last day in the office will be 31 March. The process to find a replacement has commenced and we have distributed the advertisement on Monday 23 March.

Wishing you all of the best in these difficult times.

Stay safe!

**Kind regards**  
**Anton**

