



agriculture, land reform & rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Media statement

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South Africa's fifth break-bulk reefer citrus shipment to Japan and China departs today

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is pleased to announce the fifth break-bulk vessel shipment of citrus from South Africa to China and Japan amid the Covid-19 outbreak. The vessel is planned to depart during the course of the day. This is the first break-bulk vessel shipment in the 2020 export season adding to the four shipments that were exported in the 2019 season. The 2019 was a historical year as the South African citrus industry marked its maiden break-bulk shipment of citrus through a specialised reefer vessel to Japan and China.

The Baltic Patriot Vessel will leave South Africa with 4 521 tons of grape fruit and lemons destined for Japanese and Chinese export markets. The expected date of arrival in Japan is 18 May 2020 while for China it is 26 May 2020. Loading of the vessel, which started on 25 April 2020 at the Maydon Wharf Fruit Terminal in Durban under thorough inspections, was concluded yesterday. The fruit harvesting, sorting, washing, transportation, inspection, loading and related aspects was conducted by essential workers during the lockdown. The department extends its appreciation to everyone who made this a success, and more importantly, the essential workers who continued to work tirelessly under trying conditions in pursuit of local and global food security.

The citrus industry continues to be one of the critical industries that creates 160 000 direct jobs and earns approximately R20 billion from exports only. South Africa exports two million tons of citrus annually, making it the second highest global exporter of citrus. Citrus comprises of oranges, lemons, grapefruit and soft citrus.

Given the challenges posed by Covid-19, the department continues to engage with trading partners to ensure that, where possible, export programmes proceed as planned.

The department calls upon all farmers, farmworkers, pack house workers, inspectors, drivers and everyone in the agriculture and food value chain to observe the Covid-19 hygiene and social distancing measures in the quest to grow our economy and feed the people, both local and internationally.

Journalists who wish to take pictures of the vessel may do so today between 09:00 and 11:00, by contacting Mr Mpho Sekgala on 083 962 5807.

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