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SOUTH AFRICA
FRESH PRODUCE
EXPORTERS' FORUM

“Keeping it Fresh”

News from the FPEF – 24 June 2020

Dear FPEF members,

BFAP (Bureau for Agricultural Policy) - End to End Agro-Food Chain Tracker

At the start of the lockdown, we informed you about the *End to End Agro-Food Chain Tracker* which was developed and managed by BFAP (Bureau for Agricultural Policy). We had the opportunity to provide information twice per week on challenges and obstacles which our industry encountered - most of which have been addressed through the



various regulation amendments that have been made in the past few

months. The Tracker reports were submitted to the *COVID-19 Agriculture Task Team* and shared with the *National Joint Command Centre*, the *Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic)* and the *Presidency*.

Given that the input from the industry has not changed significantly in the past two to three weeks (mainly relating to challenges that would not disappear over the short run), and lockdown regulations have been relaxed, BFAP is of the opinion that the *End to End Agro-Food Chain Tracker* has served its purpose as a rapid response tool in the current format and frequency of reports and have decided to stop the surveys & reports. However, in the case of a lapse back to levels four and five, the *End to End*

Agro-Food Chain Tracker could be re-activated. Current/ongoing challenges such as the ports issue, will remain to receive the necessary high-level attention via our interaction with Agbiz. Please continue to inform us about other challenges/disruptions which you are experiencing in order for us to elevate it.

We thank Prof Ferdi Meyer and his BFAP team for this value-adding service which they are providing. Please visit BFAP's [COVID-19 site](#) for further reports on [Trade](#) and [Food Affordability](#), a bi-monthly report series which BFAP is publishing with DALRRD and the NAMC.

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COVID-19: INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

China:

China's fresh fruit imports are facing disruption as customs authorities at ports across the country begin testing incoming shipments for Covid-19.

"Customs has begun testing for Covid-19 on the packaging and surface of the fruits entering the port," an in-market source at Shanghai Huizhan Fruit & Vegetable Wholesale market told *Asiafruit*. "Ports in other regions have similar measures but they're not as strict as Shanghai. The new measures come in the wake of the [closure of Beijing's Xinfadi Market](#) following a coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak last week, which has been linked by market authorities to the chopping board used by a seller of imported salmon.

PORT OF CAPE TOWN

The Cape Town Container Terminal (CTCT) and the Cape Town Multi-Purpose Terminal (MPT) remain operational despite the increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases in the Western Cape. Within the human capital constraints presented under the pandemic, CTCT is operating at just below 60% and the (MPT) at 75%. The strategy is to increase and activate additional resources in the short term. The CTCT has already commenced implementing a fifth gang on the waterside, which will greatly assist in reducing vessel berth time. TPT received approval for South African based technicians to do the assembly to ensure that commissioning is not delayed.



CTCT:

- Took delivery of its four new Straddle carriers earlier this year.
- The four new rubber tyre gantries are still scheduled to arrive in November with the postscript that they will now be fully assembled to circumnavigate the restrictions on technicians not being able to travel to SA.

On the MPT front:

- Two generator packs have been leased in to further assist the fruit industry with additional operational capacity.
- Capacity is planned to increase from the 220 installed reefer points to 280 this week.
- Additional berth capacity is available as when it is feasible and safe to use vessels gear, which is aimed to reduce queuing.

Another bit of **non-COVID information** is that we are actively participating in the process of developing the **Masterplan for Agriculture** under the auspices of DALRRD (The *Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development*). **Wandile Sihlobo**, Agbiz's Chief Economist shared some of his insights with regards to this plan:

- Such a plan should prioritise high-value job-creating subsectors, and not only focus on areas where the agriculture sector is well established at the commercial level, but rather on new areas that still have untapped potential. Such areas involve the former homeland regions of South Africa, government land and underperforming land reform farms. The Master Plan should map these



areas, along with potential agricultural activities which could be promoted. Another crucial step will be to understand why agricultural development has lagged over the past two decades in such regions, while in the commercial agriculture areas the output has more than doubled since 1994.

- There are several reasons which explain this disparity in fortunes, the major ones being lower levels of investment in agriculture and lack of infrastructure.
- All these ideas aren't new. There is no need to re-invent the wheel. Rather, the focus should be on understanding why there have been low levels of policy implementation over the past two decades. Addressing the stumbling blocks to development (i.e. investment and infrastructure) and focusing on effective implementation are the key ingredients of a successful post-COVID19 agricultural sector.
- Given that the private sector's role might have been less pronounced in the past, the tight fiscal position that the South African government is currently in demands a need for external funding to drive development in agriculture. This means for the better part, agricultural development in a post-COVID-19 will require deeper and greater participation of the private sector. However, effective private sector participation demands that government provides greater levels of policy certainty, especially land reform. The government will have to take an investment friendlier approach, which is still anchored in development.



Since the Master Plan process has commenced last year, it is clear that **transformation** of the agricultural sector will be one of the main pillars of such a plan - and thus, we repeat our request to provide information of your transformation activities. We have recently distributed the fruit industry's Transformation Report to all our members - and from the report it is clear that we (the fresh fruit export industry) needs to do more and/or communicate what is already being done. Please send information to our Transformation Manager, Johannes Brand: johannes@fpéf.co.za.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS

At this stage, due to the uncertainties with regards to international travel, the format of trade shows (should they continue) and funding of these events, the FPEF and FruitSA Boards' decision not to participate still stands. Should there be drastic positive developments and changes, the decision may be revisited; however, in some cases (e.g. *Fruit Attraction* in Madrid, contracts must be signed and deposits paid by 30 June – which is too risky).

The dtic (Department of Trade, Industry and Competition) indicated on their 2020 year planner that they would fund *Asia Fruit Logistica* and *World Food Moscow*. This is still indicated as such.



REMINDER: SA FRUIT JOURNAL SURVEY

Amidst pandemic-related challenges pertaining to the distribution of the SA Fruit Journal by the Post Office, we are currently exploring alternative avenues, including an electronic option. Please assist us in making an informed decision in this regard by completing the survey, either electronically or via the attached Word document. We're also using this opportunity to get a feel for your overall experience of the magazine.

Please complete the survey before **13 July 2020** and if you've responded via the Word doc, email it to editor@safj.co.za.

You may also access the Jun/Jul edition of the SA Fruit Journal electronically here: <https://www.safj.co.za/publication/sa-fruit-journal-june-july-2020/>
Survey weblink: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N6N2DF2>

We look forward to using your insights for the overall betterment of this longstanding industry mouthpiece.

COVID-19

Herewith, a **summary of the rules and regulations** which have been published in the Government Gazette since the previous edition of *Keeping it Fresh*:

<i>Reopening of personal care services</i>	<u>Protocols for personal care services</u>
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USEFUL LINKS – COVID-19

You can find relevant information about **COVID-19** on our website: www.fpef.co.za

Official SA Government information site: <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

All official government **regulations and guidelines** are available at <https://www.gov.za/coronavirus/guidelines>

Emergency Hotline: [0800 029 999](tel:0800029999)

WhatsApp Support Line: [0600-123456](tel:0600123456)

Let's keep our social distance, continue to wash hands and sanitise and wear our masks.

***Kind regards
Anton***

