



Dear FPEF Members,

We certainly live in interesting times — particularly with the ongoing impact of President Trump’s Executive Orders, which are often issued with little notice and sometimes withdrawn or revised just as abruptly.

As the FPEF, we actively participate in various forums and industry structures to both voice our concerns about the implications of these US policy changes and to gain insights that help inform our strategic response.

For example, when the United States announced a 90-day reprieve before implementing the 30% import duty, we highlighted that in our industry, the effective window is only 60 days. This is due to the lead time required to ship fruit in order for it to arrive in the US before the deadline.

In times like these, the value of our membership in organizations such as **Agbiz**, **SHAFPE**, the **IFPA**, and particularly the **Agbiz Fruit Desk**, becomes especially apparent.

In the previous edition of *Keeping it Fresh*, we reported on our involvement with the Merchant Shipping Bill and other regulatory developments. Updates on other operational matters are included in the remainder of this week’s edition.

Feedback will also be given on our participation in the **Fresh Produce India Trade show in Mumbai**, the latest news regarding our **Graduate Placement programme (Young Professionals)**, **logistics** and other relevant matters.



Membership Fees - Thank you!

On behalf of our entire team at FPEF, **we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to each member for their continued commitment and timely payment of membership fees each year.**

Your membership contributions plays a vital role in helping us achieve the best outcomes which benefit our members and forms an essential part to sustain and support the important work that needs to be done. Be assured of our continued dedication in our efforts to add value to our members.

FPEF Young Professional Network (YPN) AI Workshop

The FPEF's YPN was established at the **beginning of 2025** as an offshoot from its **Graduate Placement Programme**. The YPN is comprised of all present and past young professionals in the industry appointed through our graduate placement programme. The purpose of the YPN is to stimulate entrepreneurship development, personal and skills development, industry exposure, relationship building and fun, provide networking opportunities and peer to peer support. The YPN activities are ideated and implemented by a committee of volunteer young professionals.



On the **29th of March**, the FPEF YPN hosted an **AI Workshop at Zest Fruits, Stellenbosch**. The focus was on leveraging generative AI to enhance communication, efficiency, and decision-making in the workplace. From lively discussions to hands-on demos, the YP's explored how AI is transforming work—and left inspired to make more effective use of AI in the workplace. The workshop was facilitated by **Premodial Zhou**, cofounder of **Rapidev Labs in Cape Town**. Premodial covered a range of AI tools including ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Copilot and Perplexity and provided an overview of Prompt Engineering and its importance in effective use of generative AI.

Special thanks to **Premodial Zou** for facilitating the workshop and to **Zest fruits** for providing the venue and sponsoring the catering.

Update on Transnet wage negotiations

On Monday the 14th of April, **Transnet management** and **UNTU** (United National Transport Union) attended the conciliation process at the **Transnet Bargaining Council** and on failure to reach an agreement, a deadlock has been declared. The **CCMA Commissioner** will issue a certificate of non-resolution, legally enabling UNTU to commence with industrial action. The union stated that picketing rules were finalized prior to the start of the negotiations and as such the union will begin the balloting process during which union members will decide if they should proceed to strike.

Citrus season readiness

Both **Durban and Eastern Cape Terminals** presented seasonal readiness plans to industry on **Friday the 11th of April** and progress has been made on the port equipment front. A complete overview will be distributed with the logistics update but some highlights below;

- Pier 2 backlog (vessels at anchor) has been cleared
- Pier 2 – 20 new straddle carriers in operation
- Pier 1 – 9 RTG's are being assembled, the first 5 will be handed over to operations on the 18th of April
- PECT One new STS crane handed over to operations on the 14th of April
- PECT -12 new straddle carriers on order, delivery November 2025
- CTCT – 9 new RTG's discharged, first batch ready end July, the second batch will be handed over in August
- CTCT 4 straddle carriers to be delivered end November 2025



New Ship to Shore crane launched at Port Elizabeth Container Terminal (PECT)



Rubber Tyre Gantries (RTG) assembly in progress



In the foreground, parts of the 9 newly discharged Rubber Tyre Gantries (RTG) at Cape Town Container Terminal (CTCT).

FPEF and Fruit SA delegation visits to India

The Fruit SA delegation arrived in India with a full schedule to strengthen market access negotiations and removing tariff and non-tariff barriers. Also, what is equally important, is promoting and developing the South African fruit brand in the developing market of India.

The delegation started with a round of meetings with importers, to gain an understanding of the trade environment and challenges & opportunities for RSA fruit exporters. Great insight emerged which supported the Fruit SA delegation to have some context when engaging government authorities in India for market access.



Werner van Rooyen with Prof Anil Sooklal (High Commissioner) and Marletta Kellerman

The delegation continued with the schedule and attended a meeting with the South African High Commission in India. The **South African High Commission staff** introduced the **Fruit South Africa delegation to High Commissioner, Professor Anil Sooklal**, who highlighted the importance of the **Southern African Customs Union (SACU)** in negotiating a trade agreement with India. The High Commissioner also emphasized the need for South African Ministers to conduct official visits to India to strengthen bilateral relations.



The High Commissioner will conduct an official visit to the **Western Cape between mid-May and early June**, with **Hortgro and the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum offering to facilitate a tour** into the supply chain processes of the fresh produce industry. The High Commissioner and Fruit SA delegation **agreed to establish an India-South Africa Focus Group**, to facilitate information sharing of business challenges and opportunities for the benefit of trade between India and South Africa. The focus group will also aim to inform the High Commission on pertinent business matters to enhance trade.

The **Fruit South Africa delegation** also met with the **Ministry of Commerce in India** advocating for the reduction of tariffs on produce exports to India. The Ministry welcomed South Africa to actively engage in the process. It is important to note that **South Africa must obtain formal approval from signatories of SACU**.



Lastly, the **Fruit SA delegation, led by the DoA and Deputy High Commissioner**, entered market access negotiations with the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MAFW) in India**, under the leadership of the **Joint Secretary, Mr Agrawal**. The meeting proved to be successful with positive feedback received from both parties. In principle, both countries will aim to fast-track market access matters by outlining a projected timeframe to guide discussions, for earlier results.



Fresh Produce India

The FPEF attended **Fresh Produce India from 3 - 4 April in Mumbai** as part of a **FruitSA delegation**. **FruitSA** was a **platinum sponsor** at this event.



Fresh Produce India brings together key players to discuss the big trends and opportunities in India's fast-moving fresh produce business.

The **COO of the FPEF, Mr Werner van Rooyen** gave a presentation on *South Africa's fresh fruit trade with India* and was also part of a panel discussion, *Supplier spotlight: South Africa*.

The other panellists were **Gagan Khosla (NGK Trading in India)**, **Jacques du Preez (Hortgro)** and **Derek Donkin (Subtrop)**. The panel discussion was well attended by the audience.





**Freek Dreyer and Gedio Labane
(Consul General)**



FPEF members attending the event

Until next time, **Anton Kruger**