



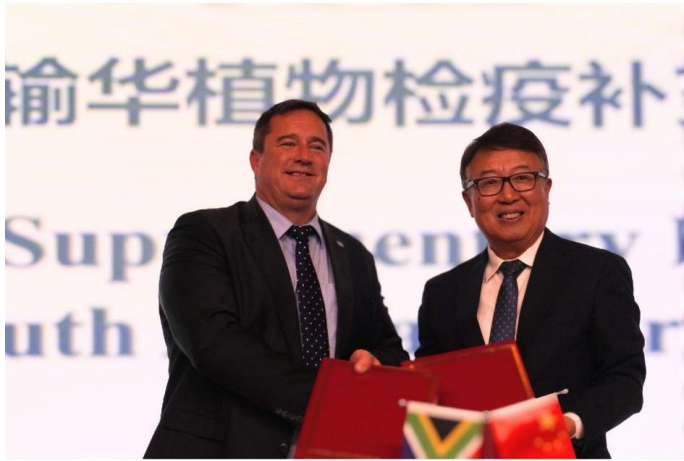
KEEPING IT FRESH



News from the FPEF – 15 April 2026

Dear FPEF Members,

The global operating environment remains volatile, and recent developments in the Middle East are a stark reminder of how quickly logistics dynamics can shift. Ongoing conflict in the region continues to disrupt key shipping routes and access points, with ripple effects being felt across global supply chains. For our exporters, this translates into longer transit times, higher costs, and increased uncertainty when servicing key markets. While alternative routing options are being explored, these come with their own constraints, including congestion and limited suitability for certain product categories.



Against this backdrop, there are also encouraging developments on the market access front. South Africa's recent agreement with China on a new citrus protocol is a positive step forward, paving the way for improved and more efficient access into one of our most important growth markets. This progress reflects the value of sustained engagement and collaboration between industry and government. We now look ahead to the conclusion of tariff negotiations, which, if finalised favourably, could further unlock opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of South African citrus in China.

In a season defined by both disruption and opportunity, the ability to navigate logistics challenges while advancing market access remains critical. As FPEF, we continue to engage across these fronts to ensure that our members are not only able to reach markets, but to do so sustainably and competitively.



- Market Access
- Government Engagement
- Export process assistance
- Provide Information
- Transformation
- Research, Development and Innovation

Membership Badge

As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen the visibility and credibility of the South African fresh produce export industry, FPEF is pleased to introduce the **FPEF Certified Member Badge**.

As a member in good standing of FPEF, you are entitled to display the **FPEF Member Badge** on your website and marketing material as a mark of credibility and alignment with industry standards.

This badge is intended to serve as a **badge of honour** for our members — reinforcing trust, professionalism, and our collective commitment to a globally competitive export industry.

Please contact Claudia at claudia@fpf.co.za if you would like us to send you the badge.



MARKET ACCESS

Citrus Protocol Update: China Market Access

We are pleased to have participated in the revised citrus export protocol between South Africa and China that was formally signed last week – an important milestone in our ongoing efforts to improve market access conditions. The FPEF CEO attended the ceremony with representatives from CGA, Fruit SA and Agbiz.

While the full details and implementation timeline are still subject to finalisation between the Department of Agriculture and their Chinese counterparts, the amendment is expected to deliver meaningful improvements. Early indications are that the updated protocol will allow for more efficient plant health treatment options, reduce compliance costs, and support the delivery of high-quality fruit into the Chinese market.



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At this stage, it would be premature to communicate specific operational details. These will be released in due course by the Citrus Research International (CRI), once the necessary bilateral processes have been concluded and formal clearance has been obtained.

Nonetheless, this development is a strong signal of progress and should position the industry well for the 2026 season and beyond.

China Tariff Discussions: Progress, but Manage Expectations

Following recent engagements between South Africa and China, there has been growing industry interest in the potential for improved tariff access under the proposed framework and Early Harvest discussions.

While there is clear momentum, it is important to manage expectations. Discussions are currently focused on the structure of an Early Harvest Agreement, including the exchange of tariff offers and the phasing down of duties over time. Any agreement will need to meet World Trade Organization requirements, which means that some level of reciprocity will be required. However, this does not imply a like-for-like exchange, and provisions do exist to accommodate differences in development between trading partners.

Although 1 May has been publicly announced for zero tariffs, timelines remain uncertain, with neither the dtic, SARS and/or the Chinese authorities able to provide certainty on the extent, period or conditions relating to this. We will inform our members as soon as we receive clear direction regarding this.

The fact that these negotiations are actively underway represents a meaningful shift from previous years, where little to no progress was made on tariff-related access into China. From an agriculture perspective, the potential upside remains significant, while the broader risks are likely to be more pronounced in other sectors of the economy. As always, FPEF will continue to engage through the appropriate platforms to ensure that the interests of fresh produce exporters are well represented as these discussions evolve.

Durban Gateway terminal managed by ITCSI

We met with the Regional as well as local ITCSI management to gain some insight into the current situation as well as the outlook for the rest of the year. The immediate focus is to stabilize operations and deliver consistent service by improving straddle carrier availability. The tender process did not allow physical due diligence, and the condition of machinery was not known prior to ICTSI taking over the terminal operations. Considerable time is spent on procuring spare parts and implementing a robust maintenance plan. They have engaged Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM’s) as well as other experts.



Some of the current action points

- Reduce housekeeping moves in the terminal to increase efficiency and productivity
- Reimplement Navis over the next four months
- Installing fibre optics to have WIFI in the terminal
- Running 10 ship to shore cranes, the terminal achieves a higher productivity than when they deploy 12 cranes.
- Getting three substations online to have all nine functional

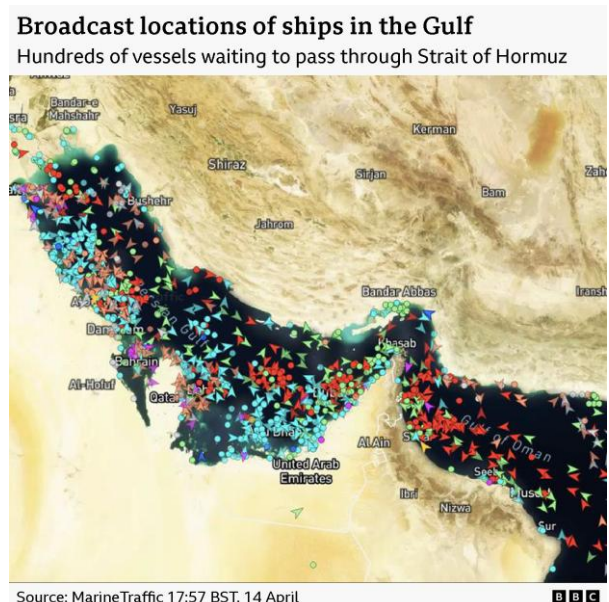
During the handover, the target was set to improve Gross Crane Moves per Hour (GCH) from 18 to 28 as well as Ship Working Hour (SWH) from 60 to 120. These improvements are envisaged to reduce logistics costs and improve service quality, thus broadening market access and attracting new volumes. While we can expect improvement over time, they expect to reach productivity targets in three years' time taking into account that ordering new equipment will take between 18 and 24 months.

War in the Middle East

Vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is largely unchanged and currently at a near standstill, with only a small fraction of normal ship movements due to security risks, insurance constraints, and ongoing tensions involving Iran.

There is a noticeable outflow of expatriates from parts of the Middle East, though no confirmed total figure yet. The largest disruption and displacement are linked to Iran, while Gulf states such as United Arab Emirates and Qatar are seeing more precautionary departures rather than mass exodus.

The war is expected to affect Hajj, mainly through higher travel costs, airspace restrictions, and logistical challenges. However, Saudi Arabia is still expected to proceed with the pilgrimage, possibly with tighter controls, reduced numbers from some regions, and increased costs rather than a full cancellation.



Transformation – FPEF Young Professionals Network (YPN)

The FPEF’s YPN working group met on Saturday to kick off the planning process for the 2026 events. The purpose of the YPN is to support the personal and career development of young professionals recruited to the industry through the FPEF’s graduate placement programme and to create a space for peer-to-peer networking and support. This year the YPN is planning a visit to the port of Cape Town in June and a big networking and career development event in September. Watch this space.



Until next time,

Piet