



KEEPING IT FRESH

fpef
fresh produce
EXPORTERS' FORUM
SOUTH AFRICA

News from the FPEF – 12 May 2026

Dear FPEF Members,

“It’s all about the fruit.”



That simple phrase came up repeatedly at the recent **Go Reefers** event where I had the opportunity to speak alongside others in the logistics ecosystem. While the event naturally focused on current events and future scenarios influencing shipping, infrastructure and supply chain efficiency, the underlying message was an important one: **everything we do ultimately begins and ends with the fruit itself** — the growers who produce it, the exporters who market

it, the logistics who handle it and the thousands of jobs and communities that depend on getting South African produce to global markets.

That message aligns closely with the export overview we recently presented to industry stakeholders. South Africa’s fresh produce export sector remains an incredible success story — built on resilient growers, world-class exporters, and a reputation for quality that continues to open doors in global markets. But maintaining that growth trajectory is becoming increasingly complex.



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Global trade conditions remain volatile. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East continues to disrupt shipping routes, increase transit uncertainty and add further cost pressure through surcharges and delays. For many exporters, these costs come on top of already tight margins and increasingly demanding market conditions.

Closer to home, Mother Nature has also reminded us that agriculture remains deeply exposed to events beyond our control. Severe weather in the Western Cape has created operational disruptions, while flooding in parts of the Eastern Cape has caused significant damage in certain production regions. Our thoughts remain with those producers and communities directly affected as they begin assessing the full extent of the impact.



Severe weather impact in the Eastern Cape

These challenges reinforce an important reality: our industry operates in an environment where external shocks — whether geopolitical, logistical or climatic — are becoming more frequent. That makes resilience, adaptability and collaboration more important than ever.

Despite these headwinds, the long-term fundamentals of our sector remain strong. Global demand for healthy, high-quality fresh produce continues to grow, and South Africa remains exceptionally well positioned to benefit — provided we continue tackling the structural constraints that limit our competitiveness.

At FPEF, our focus remains exactly where it should be: helping ensure that the broader ecosystem works better for the fruit.

Because at the end of the day — **it really is all about the fruit.**



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MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS - MARLETTA KELLERMAN

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@fpef.co.za if you would like us to send you the badge.



INDIA MARKET ACCESS VISIT – WERNER VAN ROOYEN

India Market Access Visit

The FPEF formed part of a **Fruit South Africa (FSA)** delegation concluding a successful visit to **New Delhi** and **Mumbai** from **16–21 April 2026**. The Fruit South Africa delegation was led by the **Department of Agriculture**, and the **South African High Commission**. The mission focused on advancing market access negotiations and participating in the Fresh Produce India 2026 conference.



At the **Fresh Produce India conference**, the FPEF gained valuable insights into India's rapidly growing fresh produce market, which is projected to reach **US\$62.41 billion by 2030**. The shift towards value-led purchasing, health consciousness, and modern retail in major cities presents significant opportunities for South African fruit.

Accelerating market access, productive meetings with the **Indian Ministry of Agriculture (MAFW)** and **Ministry of Commerce** yielded concrete progress on several fronts. During both meetings with the Indian authorities, there was an urgency to expedite outstanding market access matters. On the reciprocity principle, both countries committed to expediting market access for each other's priority products.



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The South African High Commissioner, Prof Anil Sooklal and Eric Mudau (DoA: Plant Health)

The South African High Commissioner, **Prof Anil Sooklal**, emphasized the immense untapped potential in India and the urgency of finalising the proposed **SACU-India Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)**.

A key theme of the visit was collaboration on technical expertise. A proposal for knowledge exchange between South African and Indian universities and agricultural experts was positively received by both the MAFW and the Ministry of Commerce, signalling a desire for a deeper, more strategic partnership within the BRICS framework.

The visit marks a significant step forward in unlocking the Indian market for South African fruit, with clear follow-up actions and a renewed commitment from government and industry to work together.



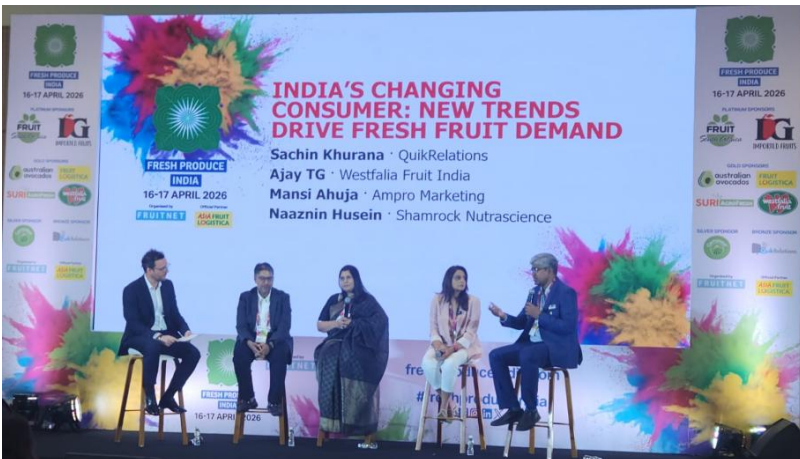
Meeting with the Ministry of Commerce in India.



Meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare



The FPEF and HORTGRO visit to the Wholesale market and welcomed by IG International



Fresh Produce India

Our members, Westfalia Fruit and Core Fruit receiving awards at the Fresh Produce India conference.



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Late Arrival / windbound recovery workgroups

Transnet remains committed to improving productivity across terminal operations. One of the key findings from a recent terminal best practice report highlighted that stacks in Cape Town often remain open past cut-offs, resulting in time lost through vessel replanning and the splitting of terminal resources between reefer intake and reefer loading operations.

To address these challenges, a dedicated workgroup was established in April to identify and implement an optimal process aimed at ensuring all cargo is received into the stack without causing vessel delays.

Last week, Transnet engaged with the broader supply chain, beginning with PPECB, which uses the Export Notification system to provide the port with advance visibility of the number of containers expected to pack the following day, broken down by vessel and discharge port. This information will enable the terminal to allocate resources more effectively and improve alignment with the truck booking system.

Back-of-port facilities have expressed strong interest in supporting night-run operations and emphasised the need for a robust and coordinated process. Transnet is aiming for a coordinated operational startup following windbound periods, with back-of-port facilities expected to play a critical role in facilitating container movements.

Exporters and industry bodies also shared valuable insights into the functioning of the fruit supply chain, including fruit age targets and the operational support required by industry stakeholders.

The next round of engagements is scheduled to take place in early June.



Antoinette van Heerden (Logistical Affairs Manager FPEF), **Dann-Lee Morrie** (Transport Manager Core), **Anneke Jacobs** (Operations Manager Core), **Henriette Nel** (Logistics Manager Core), **Faith Chetty** (Senior Specialist, Containers Commercial & Planning), **Avril Murugan** (Transnet National Logistics Manager), **Vis Loganathan** (Transnet National Integration Manager) and **Nico van Staden** (CEO Core)



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Vis Loganathan (Transnet National Integration Manager) and **Elton Snell** (Senior BI Business Analyst at PPECB)



Vis Loganathan (Transnet National Integration Manager), **Faith Chetty** (Senior Specialist, Containers Commercial & Planning), **Avril Murugan** (Transnet National Logistics Manager), **Mecia Petersen** (CEO SATI) and **Wilton September** (SATI Transformation Manager)

Transnet Strategic MOU

In January 2026, Transnet signed a strategic **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Port of Antwerp-Bruges International (PoABI)** and the **Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center (APEC)** to support the modernisation of South Africa’s port system, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen regional trade competitiveness.

Building on this milestone, a Transnet delegation led by **Group Chief Executive Adv Michelle Phillips** met with representatives from the **Embassy of Belgium** and the **Government of Flanders** on **8 May 2026** to advance the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Held at the **Embassy of Belgium in Pretoria**, the meeting focused on finalising the framework for the three-year partnership and establishing the **Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC)**, which will oversee implementation of the MoU. The committee is expected to convene next month to develop annual monitoring plans, coordinate working groups, and track progress against agreed objectives.



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Key areas of collaboration under the MoU include:

- Managerial, operational, strategic, and governance advisory support
- Sustainability strategy and policy development for energy, ecological, and social responsibility transitions
- Port operations and digitalisation
- Corridor development and foreign investment programmes
- Training and capacity building for individuals and institutions



Nicolas Vandeviver (Deputy General Representative of Flanders in Southern Africa), **Thomas Castrel** (General Representative of Flanders in Southern Africa), **Adv Michelle Phillips** (Transnet Group CEO) and **Solly Letsoalo** (Transnet Group Chief Operating Officer).

Until next time,

Piet