



# KEEPING IT FRESH



**News from the FPEF – 27 March 2024**

## **Dear FPEF Members,**

In terms of generic promotions, the FPEF has participated in the recent Fresh Produce India 2024 – hosted in Mumbai. The FPEF was part of a Fruit SA delegation, with Fruit SA being one of the few platinum sponsors of the trade fair this year. During the Fresh Produce India Conference, speakers shared valuable information about market developments for important fruit kinds in India.

Some of the important information obtained include the following:

- The Indian fruit market is continuing with its evolution, whilst the available platforms for accessing fruit – retail, street vendors and e-commerce – are continuing to thrive.
- India has become the country with the largest population (about 1.45 billion) and has the fastest growing economy in the world. It will continue to be a growing market for imported fruit, since the youth, the upper and middle classes have become health conscious and consume food that they are convinced is safe.
- The average age in India is 29 years, which shows the potential for this young population to make informed choices when it comes to food consumption. It was interesting to note that the so-called Generation Z youth are more ‘body conscious’ than mere ‘health conscious’.
- Avocados and blueberries have become the most popular fruit kinds, since the demand has doubled over the past three years and there is a shift towards the consumption of ‘superfoods’. It seems that our applications for market access are moving forward.
- Apples continue to be the biggest share of imported fruit, followed by citrus and table grapes.
- Indian Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are growing exponentially economically, and this is where most of the future demand for imported fruit is going to come from.
- Disposable income is growing at a very fast pace, which will translate into a greater demand for healthy food – especially imported fruit.

South African fruit is favoured by consumers, due to its unparalleled flavour, colour and taste – thus the country stands a chance to dominate the Indian fruit market for the foreseeable future.

- The high import duties and tariffs were again brought to the attention of the Indian and South African governments. Both Governments again confirmed that a Free Trade Agreement for South Africa can only be negotiated via the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).



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

## LOGISTICAL AFFAIRS

The FPEF, together with Agbiz and other industry organisations, is continuing to seek solutions to port issues, both on a high level and on an operational level. In light of this, the FPEF Logistical Affairs Manager, **Antoinette van Heerden**, was a speaker at the recent IFPA (International Fresh Produce Association): Fresh Solutions Conference. The essence of her address was captured in the article below, as written by **Clayton Swart @ FreshPlaza**:



13 March 2024  
Cavalli Estate  
Somerset West  
Cape Town



Mike Walwyn  
Director, South African Freight  
Forwarders (SAFFE)



Antoinette van Heerden  
Logistical Affairs Manager, FPEF  
(Sponsored by Capespan)



Tanel du Plooy  
Vice Registrar, APAC

### SPEAKERS

### Business unusual at end of South Africa's bumper deciduous harvest and start of citrus season

No two fruit export seasons are the same. Despite all the planning and preparedness there's just no telling what will take place during very dynamic export seasons. These are some of the key lessons learned by **Antoinette van Heerden**, Logistical Affairs Manager at the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum in South Africa.

"For FPEF it is business unusual as we plan the exports ahead of a bumper deciduous season that includes pome, stone, table grapes and berries. Last year we had 24 rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTG's) in use for the 2023 season. Here in the

Cape Town Port, there was up to 16 days delay, with 775 hours lost to wind. This caused 17 vessels who omitted the port. We lost export capacity and empty container supply. We are forced to think and find a divergent strategy guided by our Steering Committee."

Van Heerden was speaking at the International Fresh Produce Association South Africa's Fresh Solutions seminar held on 13 March in Cape Town. Audience members included some of South Africa's key fruit export companies and growers.

As the main fresh produce export port of Cape Town, together with Port Elizabeth, is seeing the end of the deciduous fruit season and getting ready to switch over to the citrus season, van Heerden says they have done as much planning as possible but were still surprised. "The Cape Town Port at the end of July 2023, had only 15 RTG's available, seven had engine failure, we quickly had to ramp up our divergent strategy before the start of the deciduous fruit season. If we can get our productivity up-to-date and a world standard, we can get two to three extra world shipping services into Cape Town."

She said the big volumes of fruit simply had to get onto ships. Containers were trucked to Port Elizabeth (PE). We had huge volumes this season. The positioning costs of R80 million is a conservative value of the cost to the industry to truck fruit to PE. However, the wind and volume will determine when to go to PE. It is important to have these levers in place. We need to get shipping lines on board too. It places pressure on trucking operators when servicing two ports."

She says the Durban delays also impacted Cape Town Port, which is something new. "For the coming SA citrus season, we're looking at how to deal with the delays." Van Heerden says they have set some goals for the deciduous and citrus season that follow right after each other. "We aim to get fruit out of the country. The fruit must spend as little time as possible on the quay. We must have regular arrivals at destination, and we must manage costs through visibility."



Market Access

Government Engagement

Export process assistance

Provide Information

Transformation

Research, Development and Innovation

The fruit industry has seen some positive developments that will help during the next season says van Heerden. This includes the new Transnet CEO and terminal management, additional staff that were appointed for the 12 hours shifts, their training on the systems as well as the order of new cranes and hauler combinations. Since February, the Cape Town Container Terminal has 28 RTG's. All these interventions will hopefully have an impact to increase container movements to get ships loaded more efficiently.

There are however certain unknowns that could impact the citrus export season. "South Africa has national elections on 29 May, we are not sure what the impact will be on state owned entities should a multi-party government be elected. We will have a new minister of transport and we're hoping for a good minister. The effectiveness of the new transport regulator is key too," concluded van Heerden.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### Members' contact information

If your contact information has changed, please notify **Claudia Walklett Ross** – [claudia@fpf.co.za](mailto:claudia@fpf.co.za) – as soon as possible, so we can update our records.

### Membership certificates

FPEF membership certificates were sent via courier to members who did not attend the FPEF Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November, where certificates were handed out. If you have not received your certificate by next week, please notify **Marletta Kellerman** – [marletta@fpf.co.za](mailto:marletta@fpf.co.za) – in order for her to follow up with the courier.

## FPEF EXPORT DIRECTORY

The 2024 edition of the FPEF Fresh Produce Export Directory is now available in Mandarin and can be downloaded from the FPEF website: [www.fpf.co.za](http://www.fpf.co.za)



## TRANSFORMATION – CITRUS INDUSTRY TRUST

The FPEF Transformation Manager, **Johannes Brand**, serves as Trustee and Vice-Chairperson of the Citrus Industry Trust on behalf of the FPEF. The trust holds investments, whilst the income from the investments is used to further transformation in the industry. Funds are currently used to further enterprise development for black citrus farmers and to support the Citrus Academy's bursary fund. Last week, the trustees visited Oakdene Farm – a beneficiary in the Kat River Valley. Fruit SA staff members, who serve as administrators for the trust, officials from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) and DALRRD, as well as a representative from the CGA Grower Development Company (which plays a vital role in representing and supporting black citrus growers) were also part of the delegation. It was encouraging to see the strides that Oakdene farm have made – despite a challenging environment.



Best regards,  
**Anton Kruger**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 @FPEFonline

 Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum

**fpef**  
fresh produce  
EXPORTERS' FORUM  
SOUTH AFRICA



Market Access

Provide Information

Government Engagement

Transformation

Export process assistance

Research, Development and Innovation