

Trouble at Durban Port

South Africa: Valencia estimate dramatically dropped

The harvest of Valencias has just started in South Africa, but despite excellent packouts the volumes are low. According to Justin Chadwick, CEO of the Citrus Growers Association in South Africa most growers are putting the low volumes down to fruit drop due to the heat and dry conditions over last summer.

As a result the Valencia Focus Group have dropped their predicted volumes by 4.8 million cartons, while the Soft Citrus Focus Group and the Navel Focus Group made slight upward changes to their predictions according to the CGA website.

10 end Week 22/11/16 Million 15 Kg Cartons	Packed	Packed	Packed	Shipped	Shipped	Original Estimate	Latest Prediction	Final Packed
SOURCE: PPECB/AGRIHUB	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2015
Grapefruit	14.1 m	14.4 m	12.5 m	12.8 m	11.5 m	12.4 m	12.9 m	16.1 m
Soft Citrus	7.6 m	7.3 m	9.3 m	6.5 m	7.9 m	11.2 m	11.7 m	10 m
Lemons	11.5 m	12.4 m	12.8 m	11.5 m	12 m	16.1 m	15.2 m	15.1 m
Navels	19.7 m	19.5 m	22 m	16.6 m	19.4 m	25.1 m	23.9 m	24.5 m
Valencia	12 m	12.2 m	13 m	7.8 m	7.6 m	46.4 m	41.6 m	52.7 m
Total	64.9 m	65.8 m	69.6 m	55.2 m	58.4 m	111.2 m	105.2 m	118.4 m

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Operational issues at Durban container terminal (Pier2)

According to Mitchell Brooke (CGA) the operational statistics which are collected daily show that the average truck volume handled at the gates on a daily basis has decreased by as much as 30% with the average total turnaround time for the trucks that are staged at roughly 300 minutes since June. The worst recorded period was a total turnaround time of roughly 600 minutes.

Most transporters are only able to achieve one container load a day and they are complaining bitterly that the low productivity is having a huge impact on their financial viability. The transporters are at the stage of threatening to blockade the entrance to DCT if the productivity is not improved.

DCT have indicated there is a massive backlog in the maintenance of equipment which is out of service, they have also indicated that large numbers of staff have been suspended recently. All in all this is causing a backlog of reefer containers entering the terminal and in turn causing a backlog at the Durban cold store facilities.

Transnet Port Terminals CE, Mr Karl Socikwa, addressed stakeholders at a meeting last week and urged for understanding at this time and committed to resolving the issues as soon as possible. A good question has been raised that as Transnet is a monopolistic state entity, should the countries container terminals not be regarded as national key points?

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