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Citrus producers pay high price for schedule disruptions at DCT

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The Durban Container Terminal. Source: TPT

Citrus producers are having to foot the bill for schedule disruptions caused by operational problems at the Durban Container Terminal (DCT), according to Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) logistics development manager Mitchell Brooke.

And this was before the current storm-related challenges faced by the port.

He said truck congestion at the terminal gates as well as vessel delays had caused major disruptions at DCT.

A number of vessels diverted from Durban to Ngqura Container Terminal (NCT) had displaced containers in the region, he added. As a result NCT had been overrun with reefer transhipments which had to be rerouted back to Durban on feeder vessels.

“The main issue here is not only the severity of the disruptions to the landside logistics, but more so the disruption to the vessel schedules, which meant citrus consignments by and large missed the weekly deliveries to receivers who use this as a leverage to penalise exporters and reduce the price agreements,” he said.

Brooke emphasised the need for Transnet to support the fruit industry since agricultural exports, with citrus as the main contributor, had played a key role in South Africa’s recovery from the recent recession.

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