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Citrus transporters urged to prepare for early peak season

14 May 2018 - by Savannah Freemantle



Freight and logistics companies who handle citrus from the northern growing regions have been warned to brace for an early peak season.

Jan-Louis Pretorius, chairman of the Citrus Growers' Association's (CGA) Grapefruit Variety Focus Group, told FTW Online that the transport and logistics peak season - when full capacity is required to handle citrus produce - would arrive earlier than usual this year due to a two-to-three-week delay in the production of grapefruit.

“Normally this peak is only reached when growers switch to harvesting oranges towards the middle of June. However, in 2018, with pack houses running at full capacity in order to catch up on the delays on their grapefruit, the peak may be reached earlier. This of course adds pressure to Durban port and all the stakeholders involved in successfully passing our fruit through the various internal distribution and export channels.”

Reports out of the Limpopo River, Letsitele and Hoedspruit regions (which collectively represent more than 60% of grapefruit production in South Africa) indicate that the colour development of fruit has been delayed as a result of warmer weather.

“The risk is, therefore, that unless growers extend their harvesting and exports by a similar margin, the season will be compressed into a shorter window. This scenario is also far from ideal for our export markets, which prefer a more even distribution of grapefruit supply, over a longer window.”

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