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First breakbulk citrus shipment to China makes history

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The Baltic Summer will be used for the first bulk citrus shipment to China and Japan.

History will be made at 12h00 today (Monday) as the first breakbulk shipment of citrus is loaded from Maydon Wharf in Durban destined for China and Japan.

This follows rigorous negotiations and the signing of a protocol between the South African government and China. "The protocol also allows co-loading of China shipments with consignments for Japan and or South Korea in separate compartments," said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

FTW Online understands that the government, along with a delegation from the Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), started negotiations in Beijing as far back as 2016 to allow for the bulk shipment of citrus to China and to allow for co-loading to Japan and South Korea.

CEO of the CGA, Justin Chadwick, tweeted over the weekend: "This is the Baltic Summer - heralding a historic moment as she loads up citrus in Durban. Historic because she is the first specialised reefer vessel to be loaded for China, and historical because she is co-loading with fruit for Japan."

According to Marine Traffic.com, the Baltic Summer is a Liberian-flagged 12 942 deadweight tonne bulk reefer vessel.

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