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SA ports handle record citrus volumes

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South Africa's ports have handled record citrus volumes this year, recording a 29.4% increase across all terminals, Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) has confirmed.

According to a statement, citrus volumes were 20.2% higher at the Cape Town Container Terminal, 31.2% higher at the Durban Container Terminals and 32.3% higher at the Ngqura and Port Elizabeth terminals.

Siyabulela Mhlaluka, general manager for sales and new business development at Transnet, said that despite the Covid-19 challenge, TPT was exceeding the reefer targets because of the availability of equipment, having sufficient plug points and human resources.

He added that TPT was in continuous discussions with customers to maximise its 24-hour operations across all its terminals to limit congestion at peak hours for better cargo flow.

The Citrus Growers' Association has attributed the annual growth in citrus volumes to new orchards coming into production and good rains across some regions.

Representing about 55% of South Africa's fruit production, citrus fruits are exported in reefers to over 100 countries, mainly in the European Union (EU), Russia, United States

of America (USA) and Mediterranean countries. Valencia oranges make up the biggest portion of the citrus export market at 35%, followed by navel oranges (19%), lemons (18%), soft citrus (16%) and grapefruit (12%).

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