

South African citrus industry shows great resolve in chaotic season

Amid a chaotic and extremely difficult season, the South African industry kept a cool head and revealed a collective spirit of getting the job done. According to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick, there are many lessons to learn from 2021. Unfortunately, there was a host of challenges. Apart from Covid-19 with all its constraints, significant vessel delays, a shortage of containers, congestion and poor productivity at the Cape Town port became a reality.

The industry found itself scrambling to secure sufficient mobile refrigerated shipping containers in order to meet this year's crop export commitments.

The rest of the year offered some good news with new market access agreements that saw South Africa securing and increasing citrus exports to Indonesia, the Philippines

However, there was another sudden setback when a wave of looting and arson swept across KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng in July, impacting the citrus value chain. In the same month Transnet, which controls ports and railway transport systems, was hit by cyber attacks, which led to a blocking of operations at its cold stores and freights.

Chadwick says that after all of this, a number of lessons can be learnt from the somewhat chaotic citrus season. "The number one lesson [is] that no matter how much you plan, you cannot plan for everything. The insurrection and cyber attacks were definitely something nobody would have expected or planned for. As a result, logistics have been a nightmare and the tail end of the season has been extremely difficult in terms of getting fruit to the ports and out of the country," he told [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/citrus-industry-shows-great-resolve-in-season-of-chaos/) (<https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/citrus-industry-shows-great-resolve-in-season-of-chaos/>).

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