



Vessel with South African citrus to arrive in empty US market today



South Africa started packing citrus fruit for the North American market the second week of May and the first fruit was shipped in containers to Port Newark in New Jersey. However, today June 14, the first dedicated conventional vessel, Cold Stream, will arrive in the Port of Philadelphia. "This kicks off a weekly vessel arrival schedule and we're estimating to ship 16 to 18 vessels into Philadelphia this season," says Suhanra Conradie, CEO Summer Citrus from South Africa (SCSA).

Any overflow fruit that is shipped in addition to the conventional vessels, was typically shipped in containers to the Port of Philadelphia. However, that situation changed this year. "We will no longer be able to ship containers into the Port of Philadelphia, but need to switch to Port Newark instead," said Conradie. "For the past three years, we had a seasonal port call with Philadelphia, but due to disruptions in the global supply chain, shipping companies like Maersk and MSC no longer make a stop in Philadelphia. This creates a timeline challenge for us as all the repacking facilities are in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, closer to the Port of Philly," she commented. Given that the container program accounts for about one third of SCSA's total citrus program, the impact could be significant. "Although we have a very good shipping plan in place, the challenge will be to execute it."

Empty domestic market

On a positive note, the East Coast is anxiously awaiting citrus fruit from South Africa. “Domestic production winded down earlier than usual and the domestic market is empty,” Conradie said. “It is an excellent window of supply for us with supply barely being able to meet demand.” The conventional vessel that arrives this week will contain 3,900 pallets of citrus fruit with about 60 percent being Clementines and 40 percent Navel oranges. Following the arrival of the Cold Stream will be The Elvira a week later. In addition to Clementines and Navels, this vessel will bring in Star Ruby grapefruit.



100,000 pallets this season

Altogether, SCSA expects to ship 100,000 pallets of citrus fruit this season, which would be a growth of 10 percent compared to last season. Volumes shipped are based on the demand of the market. As a result, Easy Peelers will make up the biggest portion of the citrus fruit basket with a share of 50 percent. The category is followed by oranges, accounting for 45 percent of planned shipments and Star Ruby grapefruit making up the balance.

On Thursday, June 16 a small function will be held at the Port of Philadelphia to celebrate the arrival of the season's first conventional vessel. In attendance will be importers, program service providers, as well as a Grower Representative from South Africa who represents SCSA's interests. “Relationships form the backbone of our program and the cohesive collaboration between all the different service providers plays a key role in the success of the program.”

Retailers interested in offering citrus from South Africa, can click [here](https://www.summercitrus.com/importer-contacts/) (<https://www.summercitrus.com/importer-contacts/>) for an overview of US importers. To receive updates from Summer Citrus from South Africa from the production and market side, click [here](https://info.summercitrus.com/trade-newsletter-subscription) (<https://info.summercitrus.com/trade-newsletter-subscription>).



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