

AIR FREIGHT / DOMESTIC / SEA FREIGHT

Citrus growers give Sona the thumbs up

15 Feb 2022 - by Staff reporter



The Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) has welcomed President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the National Address (Sona), especially in respect of what it means for the agricultural industry.

Justin Chadwick, CEO for the association, said in his most recent weekly statement: "The emphasis on a market-led economy and a greater role for the private sector bodes well for the future."

More specifically, he said: "We welcome his announcement that Transnet is focused on improving efficiencies at the ports through procuring additional equipment and implementing new systems to reduce current congestion."

In a pointed commentary on last Thursday's Sona, Chadwick noted a couple of key concerns that continued to impede economic improvement.

He said: "When electricity supply cannot be guaranteed, when railways and ports are inefficient, when innovation is held back by a scarcity of broadband spectrum, when water quality deteriorates, companies are reluctant to invest and the economy cannot function properly."

Focusing on some concerns, he emphasised that the electricity crisis was one of the greatest threats to economic and social progress.

Not to downplay any other concerns, he added that economic growth was dependent on ramping up efficiency in the country's ports and railways.

“Over several years, the functioning of our ports has declined relative to ports in other parts of the world and on the African continent. This constrains economic activity.

“The agricultural sector, for example, relies heavily on efficient, well-run ports to export their produce to overseas markets.

“Fresh produce cannot wait for days - and even weeks - stuck in a terminal.

“This hurts businesses and compromises our country's reputation as an exporter of quality fresh produce.”

Chadwick also highlighted the news that Transnet would ask for proposals from private partners for the Durban and Ngqura container terminals within the next few months, “which will enable partnerships to be in place at both terminals by October 2022”.

He also mentioned that Transnet would start the process of providing third-party access to its freight rail network from April 2022 by making slots available on the container corridor between Durban and City Deep in Gauteng.

“This collaborative effort is already showing results in reduced disruptions to rail operations.”

Given the existing strength of the country's citrus exports, Chadwick remarked that the sector held significant potential for job creation in the crop production of table and dried grapes, subtropical fruit, avocados, berries and nuts.

However, this is contingent on an enabling environment.

“The key task of government is to create the conditions that will enable the private sector – both big and small – to emerge, to grow, to access new markets, to create new products, and to hire more employees.”

Sign up to our mailing list and get daily news headlines and weekly features directly to your inbox free.

Subscribe to receive print copies of Freight News Features to your door.

G

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name

 Share

Best Newest Oldest

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Privacy

Do Not Sell My Data

ftwOnline

