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All systems go as Maputo handles first citrus shipment

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Representing a significant step forward in its ambitions to become a viable alternative to the congested Port of Durban for citrus exports, DP World in Maputo has successfully handled the first citrus reefer exports of the 2022 season.

“Through a combination of new solutions, including a direct sailing service, DP World in Maputo is proving itself as an ideal gateway for the South African citrus industry exporting to the Middle East and Southeast Asia,” said DP World Maputo CEO Christian Roeder.

French line CMA CGM launched its direct service this month from Maputo to Asia, calling Singapore and Tanjung Pelepas, using the line’s Asia Mozambique Express (Mozex) service.

The South African citrus-growing region located just across the Mozambique border produces more than 50 000 FEUs (forty foot equivalent units) over a six-month season, making it the world’s second-largest citrus exporter in 2020.

Since securing the concession to manage, develop and operate the container terminal at the Port of Maputo, DP World has made it clear that its ambition was to provide

efficient export solutions for customers in Mozambique and neighbouring markets, Roeder said.

“Finding efficient ways to export our highly in-demand fresh produce, such as citrus, has been a top priority at the Port of Maputo. Southern African fruit farmers are discovering the advantages of shorter transit times through our secure, efficient, and end-to-end logistics solutions. This means serious savings in time and money for local farmers, with better exposure to international markets.”

It was once growers and export agents had committed to a number of containers a week that CMA CGM committed to a weekly service - which is what started the ball rolling.

“Most described developments in Maputo to be likened to the ‘chicken or the egg’ scenario,” said Citrus Growers’ Association logistics development manager Mitchell Brooke recently. “Should growers wait for the ships, or should shipping lines wait for the cargo? Well, it seems as though the chicken has arrived and the egg has hatched.”

Maputo port’s strategic location, only about 100 km from Mpumalanga, a major area for citrus fruit production, significantly reduces the distance for the transportation of citrus via trucks compared to the Port of Durban. Due to their location, some of the citrus pack stores require only a 250-km round trip to the Maputo port, compared to almost 1 600 km to Durban, according to CMA CGM.

The service will be available until the end of the citrus season in October.



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