

Logistics constraints dog citrus growers the world over

19 Apr 2022 - by Staff reporter



While the problems faced by southern African citrus growers have been well documented in this portal – it's clear that they're not unique.

During a recent World Citrus Organisation (WCO) networking event, it was clear that all citrus growers around the world are facing similar challenges – logistics constraints, increasing input costs, and unsustainable returns, according to Citrus Growers' Association CEO Justin Chadwick.

“The message of unsustainable returns seems to be coming from farmers in other sectors as well – and a recent FAO report indicates that food price inflation is increasing,” he said.

But the question remains whether the farmer is receiving any more for his produce in order to cover these ever-increasing costs.

“In most cases the answer to this question is ‘no’,” said Chadwick. “Others in the value chain are taking a bigger cut, with retailers in the lead. If the farmer is not making a profit he could cut corners which impacts on planet and people, and in time he/she will go out of business, (and then what?).

“It is time for retailers to price fresh produce based on the value to consumers, and to pass on more of this price back to the producer. From what I heard at Fruit Logistica, growers are receiving returns that are not sustainable.”

Fruit Logistica is an annual trade show held in Berlin.

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