



With the citrus peak just ahead, Durban clips along

Last week a few citrus trucks were stuck in snow on Mpumalanga's Long Tom Pass, but the snow quickly melted and has not left much damage.

The late mandarin crop is almost halfway done in Burgersfort and Ohrigstad and, so far, growers say, so good. At packhouses, work continues without respite.



“The cold has definitely helped to boost colour developed but Ohrigstad and Burgersfort are cooler areas,” Smit le Roux, a citrus farmer from Burgersfort points out.

“We regularly get temperatures under 13°C so colour development isn’t much of an issue for us. There were very cold night temperatures that followed the snow, but I have not yet heard reports of cold damage.”

Logistically the season has been running without major hiccups; every now and then a cold store fills up but it’s soon loaded out.

“Within the next two or three weeks the major volumes of Valencias and late mandarins will start coming in, that’s usually when we start seeing issues. But for the moment everything’s going well.”



Praise for port authorities

Adds a packhouse manager, also from Burgersfort: ““We don’t have the congestion of previous years in Durban, trucks are available. Usually every year they stop us because it’s flooded in Durban or something else is wrong.”

The South African industry has been moving solid volumes, the packhouse manager remarks. “I think we have to take off our hats to the port that we’ve come this far without issues.”

The arson attacks on trucks which have become a regular occurrence recently re-appeared. No citrus trucks from the Burgersfort/Ohrigstad area, but there are reports of trucks carrying citrus from Nelspruit to Durban falling victim to arson.

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Author: Carolize Jansen

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