

Greater shipping opportunities for South Africa

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 28 November 2024

Ambitious conventional reefer shipping programme brings a new dimension for the country's fruit exporters



As the South African table grape and stonefruit seasons ramp up, the most comprehensive conventional reefer shipping programme for many years is being launched from the port of Cape Town.

The weekly departures from the port's multi-purpose terminal are viewed as an important addition to the logistics programme between South Africa and the UK and Europe.

Shipments to Russia during the grape and stonefruit season will also be included in the programme.

The first vessel, CS Servus, is loading in Cape Town and will depart on Saturday (30 November) to the UK and Rotterdam.

It is expected to arrive within two weeks with around 5,000 pallets of table grapes, pears and stonefruit.

The programme is operated by Anlin Shipping, an agent of the Reefer Alliance.

Charles Gantz, CEO of Anlin Shipping, said the programme was expected to run to at least mid-March, with three biweekly direct shipments to Russia between weeks 3 and 9.

The first shipment will include grapes from the country's northern regions, Aussenkehr in Namibia and stonefruit from Western Cape producers.

Anlin Shipping has for many years been operating the Western Cape joint reefer programme for citrus to the US.

Gantz explained that growers had reacted well to the conventional reefer option because they could spread the risk of shipments.

In the past, exporters had potentially viewed the conventional reefer programme as too expensive, but when measured against possible delays in container shipments due to circumstance beyond their control, they are beginning to see the benefits.

Leading exporters in the Orange River region said they preferred to ship through Cape Town, with the Eastern Cape ports of Gquberha and Ngqura as their second options.

"We can truck our containers directly from the Orange River to the Eastern Cape, which is 850km away and almost the same distance to Cape Town," said JC Fölcher, senior executive of Karsten Group. "We can also load on the MSC Express Service – which later loads in Walvis Bay."

Other exporters said they did not expect a big migration of fruit to Walvis Bay.

"While it is an option one can consider if circumstances dictate, it is an expensive option because of the distance from the Orange River, when we have better opportunities elsewhere," one exporter noted.

Stonefruit exporters said that so far this season they have had fewer problems with delays in Cape Town.

“This is a result of a later start to our season, but we also recognise that there have been improvements which we hope will make a real difference as we progress.”

EUROFRUIT

