

New cold storage facility strengthens logistics in the Eastern Cape

By Octavia Avesca Spandiel | 6 December 2024 | 7:30 am

Commercial Cold Holdings (CCH) Cold Storage officially launched its Greenbushes facility in Gqeberha on 5 December, marking a pivotal moment for the Eastern Cape's agricultural and logistics sectors.



From left: The executive team of Commercial Cold Holdings, Chris de Beer, Curt Mastbergen, Lundi Sishi, Melanie Samuels, Frederique Heering, Paul Gibbons, Francois Roux and Brendan Clarke.

Photo: Octavia Avesca Spandiel

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Strategically designed to bolster export capabilities and meet the growing demand for cold storage, the new facility is set to transform the region's role in global agricultural markets while addressing critical gaps in local infrastructure.

Speaking to *Farmer's Weekly*, Paul Gibbons, CEO of CCH, said the new facility was a vital addition to the company's portfolio and an asset to the Eastern Cape's agriculture sector.

"This tactical addition to our portfolio will bolster the export market of local citrus and other fruit, enhancing the country's export capabilities while reinforcing South Africa's position in global markets," he said.

Supporting local producers and sustainability

The cold storage facility has an 8 000-pallet capacity and is designed for mixed-use applications, including fruit exports, frozen imports, and bulk storage. By addressing gaps in the local cold chain, it ensures that producers in the Eastern Cape can store and export goods more efficiently, cutting down costs associated with using facilities in other regions.



Gibbons further mentioned the logistical challenges that local farmers faced. “The fruit sector in the Eastern Cape has great potential for export growth, but local producers have been underserved by cold storage facilities,” he said.

The facility's strategic location near the port city leverages existing shipping infrastructure, further reducing costs for exporters. Gibbons also mentioned the company's commitment to sustainability. “The renewable energy alternatives that we planned mean we can operate more efficiently, dependably, and in line with our ESG priorities,” he said.

Economic benefits for the Eastern Cape

The Greenbushes project is also a significant boost for the local economy. During construction, it created jobs in the local construction industry, and the facility itself has already generated 40 permanent positions, with about 100 more expected as operations expand.

Francois Roux, chief customer officer at CCH, told *Farmer's Weekly* about the broader impact of the company's investment strategy.

“This facility is our 11th in the group and expands our temperature-controlled capacity to 160 000 pallets across South Africa, Namibia, and soon Mozambique. We remain committed to investing in Africa's infrastructure and its people to increase food security and bring more produce to market,” he said.

Enhancing regional competitiveness

Councillor Bassie Kamana, member of the mayoral committee for Economic Development, Tourism and Agriculture in Nelson Mandela Bay, said the investment was transformative for the region.

“This facility not only addresses logistical challenges but also creates much-needed jobs for our communities,” he said.

Kamana further added that the launch showed the region's potential and the importance of partnerships between business and government. “This investment demonstrates what can be achieved when businesses recognise the opportunities in Nelson Mandela Bay,” he said.

Meeting market needs with adaptable infrastructure

By focusing on both citrus and other fruit exports, as well as frozen meat imports, the facility positions itself as a central player in South Africa's cold storage sector. Its presence in the Eastern Cape not only benefits local producers but also strengthens the region's overall competitiveness in global agricultural markets.

“This investment aligns with our mission to expand and enhance the African cold chain, ensuring food security and driving economic growth,” said Gibbons.

With its state-of-the-art design and commitment to sustainability, the facility is set to become a cornerstone of the region's agricultural and logistical landscape.



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