

# Sharp increase in South Africa's citrus container shipments expected

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 1 February 2024

## South African citrus industry warns port authority of substantial rise in container traffic through the country's container terminals this year

While the official South African citrus export crop estimate is still being finalised, the country's citrus body, Citrus Growers Association (CGA), has indicated there will a substantial increase in container shipments this year.

"Without the official estimate, I have submitted to Transnet, based on some correspondence circulated, that a 13 per cent additional reefer container volume can be expected," said Michelle Brooke, CGA executive responsible for logistics.



Image: Louise Brodie

"Some 96,000 reefer containers were exported last season with an expectation of 109,000 containers being exported in 2024," he continued.

"I anticipate a 20 per cent increase in reefer container exports from Maputo, 20 per cent from Durban, 8 per cent from Port Elizabeth and Coega and 12 per cent from Cape Town," Brooke outlined.

"We have scheduled a meeting with Transnet Port Terminals management to discuss the projections and align our efforts to ensure each of the ports' terminals are equipped and positioned to handle this season's crop."

The country's citrus industry was committed to working with Transnet, he confirmed.

"The CGA board executive have met and were briefed on these issues. A communication strategy was outlined and agreed. The CGA will provide regular updates on the status of the crop and the industry's response. The CGA will also play a role in ensuring that the industry's interests are protected and that the industry's contribution to the country's economy is maximised. The CGA will also ensure that the industry's contribution to the country's economy is maximised. The CGA will also ensure that the industry's contribution to the country's economy is maximised."

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"Eurofruit" last year, I wrote that 'Turnaround at Transnet is imminent'," said Brooke. "The article was written at that time based on the adoption of the National Logistics Crisis Committee (NLCC) and the deployment of new leadership at Transnet.

"However, we have not yet witnessed a turnaround in operational performance at Transnet, specifically at Transnet-operated container terminals, currently actually quite the contrary.

"It will be vitally important for all stakeholders in the citrus sector to understand the complications at the ports that are likely to be faced as you head into the 2024 citrus season," he noted.

The poor performances seen at the port container terminals could put down primarily down to the continued failing and extensive breakdown of the essential equipment across the ports terminals, Brooke explained.

"The statistics from the onset of November 2023 show that the average performance has declined to at least 30-50 per cent of historically-based statistical performance. This is more relevant to Durban Pier 1, Pier 2 and Cape Town terminals," he commented.

"Although there are equipment challenges across all the terminals, these terminals are underperforming at a more consistent rate."

Cape Town terminal performance had been "very poor" from the commencement of the deciduous season in December, Brooke said.

Coupled with poor operational performance, the wind disruption has been recorded as 517 hours lost (between week 45 and week 3). This is 214 hours higher than the same period last year.

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