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Local ports are ready for fruit exports – Transnet

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Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) has assured the citrus fruit industry of its commitment to contributing to a successful export season as harvest forecasts reflect a 15% increase in volumes in 2024.

TPT general manager of commercial and planning, Michelle van Buren Schele, said all container terminals across KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) would have dedicated lanes for refrigerated containers at the gates to cater for the higher volume of traffic.

“We will also increase the number of truck appointment slots based on demand and capacity during this season across KZN and the Eastern Cape,” she said.

TPT has urged port users to place orange stickers on steri-protocol refrigerated containers to ensure two-hourly monitoring in line with the port operator’s commitment.

The recruitment and training of over 200 additional cargo coordinators and port workers for the next seven months is also currently under way.

Some terminals are receiving new equipment including haulers, trailers, reach stackers and empty container handlers to enhance landside operations. Additional capacity has also been created at each terminal to improve the turnaround of empty containers, stacking up to six containers high. The evacuation of import containers via rail to back-of-port facilities will continue to enable fluidity on the landside.

TPT said a total of three terminals had been resourced in Durban to prepare for the season. The Durban Container Terminal Pier 1 has confirmed a total of 1 440 plug points with backup power. Durban Container Terminal Pier 2 has 2 424 plug points while the Durban Multipurpose Terminal has 277 plug points. In Gqeberha, the Ngqura Container Terminal has confirmed a total of 1 652 plug points and the Port Elizabeth Container Terminal 932. All electric plugs are being tested and maintained to ensure operational efficiency.

Van Buren Schele said TPT was also engaging with depots and cargo owners to prepare for the season.

“Previously, we’ve focused our communication efforts on the shipping lines, citrus growers and cold stores. This time, we’d like to fully engage the broader supply chain to ensure better planning and alignment” she said, adding that TPT would enhance its communication regarding opening stacks to ensure depots and cold stores achieved maximum flexibility.

“It is crucial for the industry to make use of the entire 24-hour operational window at terminals to ensure a successful season,” Van Buren Schele said.

The global political landscape and potential effects of the Red Sea crisis are factors influencing shipping rotations that TPT teams are strategically planning for and discussing with shipping lines.

Citrus fruits comprise 50% of fruits produced in South Africa, with the country ranking as one of the top three citrus fruit global suppliers in the world. The Netherlands, China, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United Arab Emirates are the largest consumers of the country’s exports.

PHOTO SOURCE: Celebrate More

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