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Hapag-Lloyd introduces Citrus Express service

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Source: Fruitnet

Hapag-Lloyd has formed a partnership with South African citrus growers to introduce the 'Citrus Express' service out of Durban and Port Elizabeth Ports.

The weekly service runs from Durban and Port Elizabeth directly to the Hapag-Lloyd terminal in Tangier, from where cargo is transshipped to the Mediterranean, Canada and continuing on its journey to North Europe.



According to Rogelio Busto, Hapag-Lloyd managing director South and East Africa, 2 200 reefers have been pre-positioned in South Africa, with the seasonal service offering an average of 700 reefer plugs per sailing.

Hapag-Lloyd's LIVE-Reefer smart monitoring technology is fitted to all the containers.

It transmits live data from a client's reefer container directly to their computer screen, allowing them to monitor the internal temperature and track the progress of the cargo.

It can also be used to adjust the temperature in the container and the mix of gases for controlled atmosphere conditions, which are used for fruits such as apples, pears, apricots, mangos, tomatoes, bananas, and pawpaws.

There will be 12 sailings from June 1, with Hapag-Lloyd evaluating the success with a view to expansion.

"We are in it for the long run," Busto told *Freight News*.

He describes the establishment of the service as the result of a partnership between citrus growers and Hapag-Lloyd.

The line has committed to supply and expand its service as required, while the citrus growers have committed cargo.

Hapag-Lloyd introduced the service after it was approached by the Citrus Growers Association of South Africa (CGA) and individual growers.

Growth in South African citrus exports were being constrained by a lack of capacity.

Having a third line offering a reefer service to Europe would also increase competition among the shipping lines.

The request fits in with Hapag-Lloyd's strategy to grow its reefer business in Africa, says Busto.

Justin Chadwick, CEO of the CGA, said "the citrus industry and the broader economy need as much access to shipping as possible.

"In securing market access and more streamlined logistics, South Africa could very well increase its citrus exports with 20 million 15kg cartons of citrus in the coming season."

The CGA's goal is to grow exports by another 100 million cartons by 2032.

"At the same time, we are helping them to deal with the operational challenges," says Busto.

He told FN that the local Hapag-Lloyd teams in Durban and Nelson Mandela Bay had been strengthened to provide the necessary support, in line with the company's five-pillar Strategy 2030.

The pillars are an ongoing investment in the fleet and service network; to remain among the top five global container lines and to strengthen its presence in key markets, including Africa, India, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific trade; to provide an on-time delivery rate of more than 80%; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one third by 2030; and to use technology to be a top-performing carrier.

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