

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Superior citrus quality secures higher export volumes

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Source: Fresh Plaza



South Africa's citrus export season has reached its halfway mark, with Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) recording an 18% increase in volumes at the end of June compared with last year.

"The superior quality of the fruit coming from South Africa has translated into higher volumes, with the European Union coming in as the biggest consumer, followed by the Middle East," said TPT general manager for Commercial and Planning, Michelle van Buuren Schele.

In addition to healthy fruit production this year, an increased volume of citrus fruits is also being transported to ports via rail.

The Durban Container Terminals have received 980 refrigerated containers via rail since the start of the season in April.

"While we are only in the first half of the season, this is roughly 16% higher than the entire 2024 season of 846 railed containers," she said.

According to the Citrus Growers' Association, its 106 500 national forecast volume of refrigerated containers for export remains on track

across the country's ports, while TPT said it was making good progress on plans to increase productivity, with no reported vessel backlogs and delays across terminals nationwide.

TPT said it had commissioned new equipment, which it had deployed in operations at its Durban and Port Elizabeth container terminals.

The new equipment includes a ship-to-shore crane at the Port Elizabeth Container Terminal, rubber-tired gantry cranes, straddle carriers, haulers, forklifts, trailers, reach stackers at the Durban Container Terminal as well as haulers and trailers at Cape Town container terminals and haulers in Richards Bay.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, TPT invested R3.4 billion in new equipment and infrastructure, representing an increase of 145% from the previous year.

"We are focused on growing our business and meeting customer expectations. Integrated planning is becoming a way of work with strong collaboration between ourselves and industry, across all the sectors in containers, automotive, bulk and break bulk," said Van Buuren Schele.

South Africa is the second largest producer of citrus fruits in the world after Spain, and exports to over 100 markets through container terminals managed by TPT in Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

