

Citrus exports off to a good start

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Source: Ntundo Thukwana, Getty

South Africa's Transnet Port Terminals' (TPT) container division has recorded a 21% year-on-year increase in citrus exports in April compared with the same month in 2024.

Vessels with capacity to carry 7 800 containers will call at the Durban Container Terminals, Port Elizabeth Container Terminal and the Ngqura Container Terminal until October to load exports of oranges, mandarins, lemons, clementines, grapefruit and limes destined for more than 100 markets.

TPT said the container terminals had taken steps to ensure readiness for the season. These include recruiting 256 additional workers on fixed-term contracts, conducting maintenance on all reefer plug points and adding 100 pieces of new equipment.

"Our operations have stabilised and are now focused on growing the business, meeting customer expectations and making South Africa win," said TPT General Manager for Commercial and Planning, Michelle van Buuren Schele.

The Citrus Growers' Association has forecast a 3.6% increase in citrus volumes for the 2025 season amid the threat of possible tariff hikes for the United States market, effective in July.

TPT has assured the citrus industry of its commitment to making the season successful.

In Durban, the container terminals allocated 24 hours ahead of stack opening to allow customers to bring in reefers from the first day.

The Ngqura Container Terminal will operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

The terminals are working with the South African Weather Service to monitor the risk of inclement weather.

In South Africa, citrus fruits grow in Limpopo, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal, Northern Cape and North West and are exported mainly through the Durban and Port Elizabeth Container Terminals.

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