



2024
ANNUAL REPORT

fpof
fresh produce
EXPORTERS' FORUM
SOUTH AFRICA



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

MARK JENSEN

OCTOBER 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2024

The 2023/2024 season got off to a relatively good start until, with a sense of déjà vu, the port of Cape Town became gridlocked – resulting in enormous logistical challenges. The attempts to try and find alternate solutions once the problem had already manifested, were compounded with further problems. These delays ultimately had a significant impact on the results of the stone fruit and table grape seasons.

I sincerely believe that this could have been avoided through proper advance industry consultation and collaboration. A significant risk to our principles is that those in control of the logistics chain, e.g. shipping lines, transporters, depots, exporters and forwarding agents, are so intent on protecting their own interests that they lose sight of the bigger picture of what is good for the fresh produce export industry as a whole.

A positive example of working together during the past year, was when the CGA initiated a project to bring some competition to the shipping industry. They recognised, as growers, that they were ultimately at risk of lower returns if there was not

more competition in the form of pricing and routings. At the same time, they understood that they were not in control of the logistics chain. In collaboration with their exporters and logistics service providers, enough support was obtained to bring a new European service to South Africa that should provide the industry with long-lasting benefits.

I highlight the success of working together because I believe the single biggest risk facing our industry at the moment is not the risk of exporters and their service providers working together on the logistical solutions, but rather the focus on own interests of some of the organisations within Fruit SA.

Under Fruit SA, we have made great strides in market access over the past decade. This has been supported by all Fruit SA members and their executives who contribute to their various roles, depending on the size of their constituency. This united front has been pivotal in forging relationships with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), our phytosanitary counterparts and the various embassies around the world.

At times, some members may feel that more should be done (the FPEF pushed for that in 2014) but it is important that, whatever we do, we maintain a united front rather than returning to the fragmented approach of each constituent fighting for their interests alone.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) informed us in June that they are no longer funding any trade fairs – consequently that cost falls entirely on the industry. In order to cater for a stand of the same size as in February 2024, Fruit SA member associations were required to contribute double what they had done in the previous year, and thus far only two of the members had agreed. The risk is that certain members start asking whether it is worthwhile, considering that a number of exporters have their own stands and are therefore expected to contribute to a stand they ultimately do not use only because it is in the interests of Brand South Africa.

We are indeed extremely privileged to be a part of a dynamic, growing industry that has been 'a shining light of our economy' over the past two decades. As members of the FPEF, we can be extremely proud of our team which, under Anton Kruger, continues to build and maintain significant roles in the industry that not only serve us, but the industry as a whole. Whether in relation to the shipping and logistics crisis, reefer excellence interactions, the transformation and Graduate Placement programmes, the Post-Harvest Innovation Programme or the APAC committee working with Government to rewrite the Rules – they have certainly made a significant impact.

In closing, we need to pause, take stock of our past and appreciate that our success as an industry is because we truly are 'Stronger Together'. Let's continue to strive towards the collective success of the industry and everyone fortunate enough to be a part of it.

Many thanks to Adolf Kieviet as Vice-Chairman for his support and input, and to Anton Kruger and the FPEF team.

Wishing you all a fantastic 2024/2025 season!

Regards,



Mark Jensen





MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

ANTON KRUGER

The outcome of the South African general election in 2024, which led to the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), provided the FPEF with the perfect opportunity to engage with the new ministers in government departments relevant to the fresh produce export industry. Thanks to our strong relationship with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), we also engaged with newly appointed South African ambassadors before assuming their posts at the foreign embassies to which they have been assigned to – sharing general information about our industry and requesting their assistance with market access and related matters in the different countries to which they would be posted.



These interactions emphasised the importance of working in partnership with Government to address and resolve the challenges encountered by the fresh produce export industry. We are therefore pleased that our collaborative approach – as a solution-driven industry – delivered concrete results over the past year. For example, we have had better

communication and have seen greater transparency in our engagement with Transnet and with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) – which dedicated an official to participate in market access visits and meetings with governments abroad.

The FPEF and some of the other Fruit SA member associations funded participation of the DALRRD delegate during our market access visits to India, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand over the past year. The industry also carried the cost for our participation in Fruit Logistica Berlin, Asia Fruit Logistica, Fruit Attraction and other leading international trade fairs, since the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) was not able to provide the necessary funding.

It confirmed that the severe financial problems within Government is still a serious concern; that future funding by Government for events and other activities is not guaranteed, and that the fresh produce export industry must continue funding – not only trade fairs, but also activities to assist so that our produce arrives in sound condition in export markets and our industry is sustained.



The FPEF took responsibility for organising the South African pavilions and exhibition stands at major international trade fairs. During Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024, we were assisted by the Minister Plenipotentiary and other officials who are based at the South African Embassy in Berlin, Germany. We are grateful for their assistance, which is a great example of working together.

Our market access strategy (GRO) – to gain, retain and optimise – continued to produce favourable results. It was rewarding to see that access was gained for avocados to Japan, India and the People’s Republic of China, as well as for oranges to Vietnam. The verification visits by Thai officials were successful and it seems that access for apples to Thailand will be granted before the next season.

Obtaining access to new markets in the Far East is important, but South Africa’s lack of trade agreements in many of these countries is a deterrent to fully utilising the potential. For instance, a major importer in Thailand mentioned during our recent market access visit that his company has stopped importing citrus and table grapes from South Africa due to the high (30% to 40%) import duties. They are, however, looking forward to start importing South African apples, since they attract ‘only’ a 10% import duty. We are ensuring that the lack of trade agreements receives priority on the agenda of the South African Government.

Whilst the FPEF is not opposed to a form of regulation in the industry, provided that it is practical and makes sense, the APAC (Agricultural Produce Agents’ Council) Rules for Export Agents remained problematic. As it was reported in the past two years’ Annual Reports, we realised that we had to take legal action in order to have the Rules set aside or adapted. The process, which commenced in September 2022, resulted in the APA Amendment Bill being withdrawn from Parliament in 2023 – mainly due to our efforts.

The Bill will be redrafted in collaboration with the industry, whilst a High Court Order was issued in December 2023 – instructing APAC to redraft the Rules, in conjunction with the FPEF, within 24 months. To ensure that our viewpoints are being heard, a Working Group was established – comprising of FPEF members, the APAC Registrar, the APAC Deputy Registrar and FPEF representatives on the Council: Aileen Zulch, Angelo Petersen and Liezl Gelderblom (Chairperson of the Export Agents’ Committee).

On the whole, many of the successes over the past year can be ascribed to the FPEF's liaison with the other Fruit SA member associations, DALRRD, the dtic, DIRCO, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), Transnet and the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz). At the same time, we are grateful to our members for their financial contributions, via membership and pallet fees, which helped us with our international trade endeavours and to provide assistance to Government.



I can also confirm that the FPEF is in a financially sound position, thanks to the prudent management of membership fees and external grants by our Financial Manager, Marinda Roux. Her diligence led to the FPEF obtaining unqualified audit reports every year.

To conclude, I would like to thank all the FPEF staff members for their dedication and hard work, as well as the FPEF Board, under the leadership of Mark Jensen, for the guidance and support. Let us stay true to the FPEF's commitment to contribute to a profitable, sustainable and disciplined fresh produce export industry. It will always be a privilege to be part of such an exciting industry!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Anton Kruger'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anton Kruger
FPEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO)





REPORT FROM THE COO

WERNER VAN ROOYEN

The positive shift in our political climate, following the general election in 2024, has resulted in increased business confidence in South Africa. We have witnessed the first interest rate cuts in many years, albeit in the third quarter. The stability of our political environment and renewed interest in our economy led to a stronger exchange rate. Even though this is not beneficial for exports, it certainly assists in the import of capital-intensive goods for production.

As an industry stakeholder, it was important for the FPEF to engage with the newly appointed ministers of the seventh administration. The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) remain our partners in creating a more profitable, competitive and sustainable fresh produce export industry. The FPEF drew on its relationships with these government departments over the past year to fast-track industry matters such as funding, market access and technical support.

The FPEF is a neutral industry role-player, looking to strengthen its relations with the appropriate

diplomatic channels. This is accomplished through continued engagement with embassies and consulates, whilst requesting broader representation of South African diplomats abroad. We are delighted to announce a new agricultural attaché in India, since this position was vacant for more than two years.



In 2024, the FPEF was successful in overcoming certain market access obstacles. For example, the South African citrus industry has experienced challenges with exports to Thailand for a number of years. Since as far back as 2021 and 2022, containers have been detained due to the Ministry of Agriculture in Thailand having issues with the interpretation of the protocol and the marking

requirements applicable to South African citrus consignments. Finding a solution required harmonisation across organisations and the application of accurate and permissible information on the business side of the carton – aligned with the Perishable Products Export Control (PPEC) Act, the Agricultural Product Standards (APS) Act and National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) prescriptions. The FPEF – with the support of DALRRD, the PPECB and our citrus exporter members – finally resolved the matter with the Ministry of Agriculture in Thailand. However, the industry is still facing other market access challenges, such as the cold treatment protocol failures to the Philippines and the People’s Republic of China. There is much work to be done to resolve these issues successfully.



For the FPEF, it is crucial to ensure that regulations are in accordance with the fresh produce export industry’s future needs. In this regard, the FPEF submitted written comments on the PPECB’s draft regulations

relating to the Export of Perishable Products – published in the Government Gazette: Vol. 708, 14 June 2024, No. 50825. In addition, the PPECB was consulted to address critical aspects of the regulations that concern the export of perishable products.



The FPEF COO serves as chairperson of Agri-Hub – the industry’s information service provider. Agri-Hub provides the industry with a rich source of data – particularly export and pallet event data, to use in everyday business decisions such as marketing and logistics. The FPEF is also investing in the technology stack of Agri-Hub, considering that it has not been upgraded since its inception in 2013. To stay relevant, we must move towards a more efficient way of sharing information – from the old Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) methodology to an Application Programming Interface (API) as a connection between computers or computer programs.

Regarding logistics, the FPEF was instrumental in navigating through the past deciduous fruit season. The port of Cape Town was not without its challenges, which led to the FPEF establishing a ‘war room’ (in partnership with Transnet) to address the operational challenges

experienced over the past season. The FPEF took the lead in creating the terms of reference to guide the workings of the war room.

was submitted to obtain more information about the contractual agreements between Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA).

Regards,



Werner van Rooyen
FPEF Chief Operating Officer (COO)



The FPEF also conducted an investigation into the legal remedies that are available to address operational challenges in the port of Cape Town. The FPEF, in collaboration with HORTGRO, approached senior counsel to advise the industry on the way forward. Subsequently, via our membership with the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz), a Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) request





LOGISTICAL AFFAIRS

ANTOINETTE VAN HEERDEN

It is almost a year since the FPEF CEO invited the former Minister of Public Enterprises, Pravin Gordhan, to visit a pack house and cold store in the Western Cape – drawing attention to the challenges experienced by farmers and fresh fruit exporters at the various ports. It signalled the beginning of change – starting with a new Transnet management structure to adopting an integrative collaboration with Industry – whilst orders were being placed for new terminal equipment.

Then Minister Gordhan stated that in five years, one would not recognise Transnet since the company would undergo a cultural change. Reflecting on this statement almost a year later, we have seen changes taking place slowly but surely – hence we are looking forward to accelerated performance improvement whilst we are navigating the recovery process.

Deciduous fruit season

On average, 30% of productive time is lost at Cape Town terminals during the deciduous fruit export season due to delays caused by strong winds. The timing of wind disruptions plays a significant role in the movement of fruit volumes through different ports and the utilisation of bulk vessels.

During the 2023/2024 season, significant delays in December 2023 and early January 2024 resulted in fruit build-up in the Western Cape. The situation led to more than 4 800 reefer containers being shipped through Eastern Cape ports, which put a strain on trucking resources and added costs to the logistics chain. The goal for the next season is to maximise shipments through the port of Cape Town. Several initiatives have been put into place by both Transnet and Industry in order to achieve this goal.

Rail

The Department of Transport (DOT) and Transnet's Interim Infrastructure Manager published a draft Network Statement – establishing the rules, procedures and terms that govern the use of railway infrastructure by Train Operating Companies (TOCs). Determining the tariff was a hot topic due to historical debt being factored into the calculation. This sparked robust discussions during the Interim Rail Economic Regulatory Capacity (IRERC) Information Gathering Sessions.

The FPEF represented the fresh produce export industry at the IRERC Information Gathering Sessions, emphasising the importance of maintaining the cold chain and specifying additional requirements

to accommodate reefer traffic. The FPEF also put forth recommendations on how to increase fresh produce volumes. In addition, the industry provided volumes for the short, medium and long term, as well as corridors of interest.

Red Sea impact

Diversions away from Red Sea routes caused increased traffic around the Cape of Good Hope. Due to the longer transit time on East-West trade lanes, an increased number of vessels had to be deployed to maintain schedule integrity. Reduced vessel availability and high freight rates in other regions led to few vessel calls to South African ports and lower import volumes.

Citrus season

It was expected that 2024 would be a growth year for citrus volumes, but several external factors resulted in estimates that had to be adjusted downwards on a few occasions. It was an unusual season during which the lowest Brazilian citrus crop in twenty years, led to a high demand for juicing volumes in South Africa. Frost in the northern regions of the country and flooding in the Western Cape further reduced our export volumes.

For most of the season, Durban container terminals did not experience high reefer stack utilisation – at a time in which the equipment situation remains a challenge. The Durban terminals appointed a reefer champion and a weekly ‘war room’ to facilitate the export process and deal with obstacles.

In contrast, high citrus volumes from the Eastern Cape and a new seasonal service to Europe set the scene for a busy season. At the start of the season, an off-dock procedure was established – should overflow plug facilities be required. The Red Sea diversions, mentioned earlier, had an unforeseen impact on export capacity. For example, three distressed vessels – which lost containers during winter storms – had to seek refuge at the Ngqura Container Terminal (close to Gqeberha), occupying much-needed berth capacity. The activation of the off-dock procedure assisted to mitigate the impact on exports, but could not eliminate the bottlenecks.

All port terminals received new hauler combinations during 2024 and new handling equipment will start to arrive from February 2025.





MARKETING

MARLETTA KELLERMAN

Trade fairs

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) was not able to fund our participation in any of the international fresh produce trade fairs that took place over the past financial year, which meant that it was almost entirely funded by the industry. We would like to thank our members for their membership fees and financial contributions, based on export volumes, which helped to ensure the FPEF's presence during these events.

Fruit Attraction 2023

Fruit Attraction has gained massive popularity over the past few years. This trade fair, which was hosted in Madrid during the first week of October 2023, celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. It attracted more than 90 000 visitors from 135 countries, which is the largest participation in the history of the event, making it Fruit Logistica Berlin's strongest contender.

The event was well represented by FPEF members, which highlighted the importance of this show. The FPEF had to rent extra tables and chairs – not only to accommodate South Africans who conducted their meetings at the stand, but also to make room for the constant stream of visitors. Ambassador Mthembu-Mahanyele – who is based at the South

African Embassy in Madrid, Spain, visited the stand and congratulated us on the success of the Fruit SA stand.

On the whole, Fruit Attraction was a huge success for the South African fresh produce export industry – we are grateful for the financial support of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) and the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB).



Werner van Rooyen, Marletta Kellerman and Anton Kruger at Fruit Attraction 2023.



Fruit Attraction 2023.

AgriLink 2023

The Agrilink trade fair in the Philippines took place in October 2023 – at the same time as Fruit Attraction. The FPEF had a booth at the fair and participated under the Fruit SA banner. In order to address market access matters, the Fruit SA delegation consisted of industry experts under the leadership of Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele – Director of Biosecurity at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The FPEF sponsored the participation of Dr Ntshabele whose involvement enabled government-to-government engagement.



Fruit Attraction 2023.

Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024

During the first week of February 2024, Fruit Logistica Berlin attracted more than 66 000 visitors and 2 770 exhibitors. The South African fresh produce export industry was able to fund, design and operate a national pavilion at the event at short notice when it became clear that the dtic would not be able to fund the space and stand, and could only make a partial financial contribution for the exhibition space.

The 280 m² stand had an open layout and it was continuously busy with South Africans conducting meetings. There was also a constant flow of trade visitors. Even though the FPEF provided a total of 26 tables with four chairs each – after having to rent eight additional tables – there was always a demand for more. It proved that there is a need for a stand of a considerable size, therefore all possible funding options must be considered for future events.

On the whole, more than fifty FPEF members attended Fruit Logistica Berlin, with at least fourteen having their own stands. There were also three co-exhibitors on the stand who funded their own exhibition space.

At the South African pavilion, senior political officials – based at the South African Embassy in Berlin, Germany – including the Minister Plenipotentiary, the Political Counsellor and the First Secretary (Political), assisted us every day once they become aware of the dtic's cancellation of participation. This ensured Government visibility and we greatly appreciate their assistance, which is a wonderful example of working together. Since the 2024 edition of the FPEF Export Directory was launched at the event, a copy was presented to the Minister Plenipotentiary – Mr Andries Oosthuizen.

The welcome reception was a festive occasion during which everyone could enjoy a glass of excellent South African wine. We would like to thank our sponsors for making this event possible: Contour Logistics, Dole South Africa, Everseason, Freshgold SA Exports, Fruit Heart Exporters, Komati Fruit, LCL Logistics Southern Africa, Pomona Fruit, the PPECB, SAFPRO, Stems Fruit and Unifrutti SA.

The next Fruit Logistica Berlin is scheduled for 5 to 7 February 2025.



Werner van Rooyen, Marletta Kellerman and Anton Kruger.



Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024.

Fresh Produce India 2024

Fresh Produce India was hosted in Mumbai in March 2024. The FPEF participated in this trade fair as part of a Fruit SA delegation, with Fruit SA being a Platinum sponsor to ensure increased visibility of South African fresh fruit. During the Fresh Produce India Conference, speakers – including the FPEF CEO – shared valuable information about market developments for important fruit kinds in India.



Fresh Produce India 2024.

Asia Fruit Logistica 2024

Asia Fruit Logistica returned to Hong Kong during the first week of September 2024. The 108 m² South African pavilion was funded by Fruit SA member associations (the FPEF, Berries ZA, CGA, HORTGRO, SATI and Subtrop) at a cost of R2 million. The stand was bustling with activity and well utilised by FPEF members who hosted meetings at the stand. Although a typhoon warning was issued during the event, only the last day was affected with business commencing in the afternoon.

The next Asia Fruit Logistica is scheduled for 3 to 5 September 2025.



Asia Fruit Logistica 2024.



Asia Fruit Logistica 2024.

FPEF Export Directory

The FPEF Fresh Produce Export Directory is annually updated as an essential source of information about the South African fresh produce export industry. The directory is an excellent marketing tool, since it provides a list of all FPEF members with their contact details and product information. It also features the latest statistics on South African fresh fruit and vegetable export volumes, export periods and export destinations.

The latest edition of the FPEF Export Directory was launched at Fruit Logistica Berlin 2024. Printed copies were also distributed during the Asia Fruit Logistica and Fruit Attraction trade fairs this year. To cater for the Asian market, the Export Directory was translated into Mandarin and made available on USB cards. Apart from printed copies and USB cards, the FPEF Export Directory is also available for download from the FPEF website – in English and Mandarin.



Export Council

As the official Fresh Produce Export Council in South Africa, registered with the dtic, the FPEF provides a pivotal link between Government and Industry regarding market access, promoting the industry and related matters. Every year, the FPEF submits a business plan to the dtic in order to qualify for a grant that is used for transformation.



MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATION

CLAUDIA WALKLETT

Governance

During 2024, the FPEF Board of Directors included a total of fifteen representatives of the fresh produce export industry. In addition, Mr Luke Govender of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) continued to serve as an ex officio member of the Board. In May, Mr Francois Knowles and Ms Liezl Gelderblom – both representing the Agricultural Produce Agents' Council (APAC) – were welcomed as ex officio members of the Board.

We would like to thank our Board members for their unwavering dedication and selfless service to the fresh produce export industry. Their commitment and expertise have made a significant impact; helping to foster growth and innovation without compensation.

On 23 November 2023, the FPEF hosted a successful and well-attended Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Glen Carlou Vineyards in Klapmuts. Our guest speaker was the economist, Dawie Roodt – Director of the Efficient Group, who gave an excellent perspective on the impact of the international environment (the wars in the Middle East and the

Ukraine), as well as the inability of the South African Government to deliver services in some areas that are of crucial importance to our industry, such as logistics.

The majority of the 2023 Board members indicated their availability to stand for re-election in 2024 – apart from those who had reached the end of their five-year term of office, namely Mr Wayne Mudge (Cape Five Export SA) and Mr Jan Pienaar (Grape Alliance Marketing). The following Board members were not available to serve on the Board for the upcoming year: Ms Liezl Gelderblom (Producer Ally), Ms Annelie Haumann (Stems Fruit) and Ms Mariaan Rademan (Contour Logistics).

According to the FPEF's Memorandum of Incorporation, the FPEF Board of Directors must consist of a minimum of twelve and a maximum of sixteen members. The Associate members will have four seats (instead of two), and these members need not be FPEF members. Eleven members who served on the Board in 2023 were eligible for re-election, whilst four additional candidates were nominated for election.

The following candidates, who served on the FPEF Board of Directors during 2023, were eligible for re-election:

Gary Britz	ELE Trading
Awie de Jager	Delecta Fruit
Marietjie Franzsen	The Grape Company
Mark Jensen	SAFPRO
Cyril Julius	Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB)
Adolf Kieviet	Freshworld
Nico Kotze	Capespan South Africa
Iain McIntosh	Ocean Network Express (ONE) South Africa
Hannes Nieuwoudt	Dole South Africa
Roelf Pienaar	Tru-Cape Fruit Marketing
Craig Schaefer	Core Fruit

The following candidates were nominated in the Exporter category:

Hans Boyum	Westfalia Marketing Africa
Pedré Koekemoer	Pomona Fruit
Snyman Kritzinger	Grown4U

The following candidates were nominated in the Associate category:

Chris Engelbrecht	GoGlobal Group
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FPEF members could vote for a total of fifteen candidates to serve on the FPEF Board of Directors. Votes were cast via an online polling platform, known as Slido.

After voting, the FPEF Board consisted of the following Directors during 2024:

Hans Boyum	Westfalia Marketing Africa
Gary Britz	ELE Trading
Awie de Jager	Delecta Fruit
Chris Engelbrecht	GoGlobal Group
Marietjie Franzsen	The Grape Company
Mark Jensen	SAFPRO
Cyril Julius	PPECB
Adolf Kieviet	Freshworld
Pedré Koekemoer	Pomona Fruit
Nico Kotze	Capespan South Africa
Snyman Kritzinger	Grown4U
Iain McIntosh	ONE South Africa
Hannes Nieuwoudt	Dole South Africa
Roelf Pienaar	Tru-Cape Fruit Marketing
Craig Schaefer	Core Fruit
Liezl Gelderblom	APAC (ex officio)
Luke Govender	dtic (ex officio)
Francois Knowles	APAC (ex officio)

The Board members voted for Mr Mark Jensen to serve as Chairman for 2024, and Mr Adolf Kieviet as Vice-Chairman.

Ms Liezl Gelderblom and Mr Francois Knowles of APAC, and Mr Luke Govender of the dtic, will serve as ex officio members of the FPEF Board.

In 2024, Board meetings were hosted at the FPEF offices on the following dates:

- 24 January
- 22 May
- 21 August

Membership

The FPEF membership count currently stands at 167 members. During the period under review, the FPEF had the pleasure of approving eight Exporter and eight Associate membership applications. We had seven membership resignations, consisting of three Exporter, one Emerging Exporter and three Associate members.

Membership certificates

Membership certificates – for five years, ten or more years and twenty or more years – were presented to FPEF members who attended the AGM. Berryworld was awarded a special 'Early-bird' certificate, since it was the first company to declare its volumes.

Communication

Social media

FPEF members are invited to follow and connect with us on LinkedIn, as well as Facebook.

Both the FPEF Facebook and LinkedIn pages are used to share relevant industry information, news about trade shows and to promote articles showcasing some of our exporter and associate members.

Website

The FPEF website remains an invaluable resource for keeping the industry informed about the latest news and developments. The FPEF Fresh Produce Export Directory, featuring useful graphs and statistics along with comprehensive contact details of all our members, is easily accessible for potential importers looking to connect with them. Additionally, we are pleased to offer the Export Directory in Mandarin – enhancing accessibility for a broader audience.

Newsletters

'Keeping it Fresh' is a bimonthly newsletter, designed to keep our members well-informed and connected. Each issue provides timely updates on current events, industry trends and the latest developments within the FPEF. We aim to offer insights into our ongoing projects, activities and important initiatives – ensuring that our members stay in the loop about where the FPEF is headed and what we are actively involved in.

We also distribute various newsletters on a weekly basis on behalf of our industry partners, which include the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa (Agbiz), Agri-Hub, Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), the Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA), the CGA and HORTGRO.

A thought to ponder

"Success is not just about what you accomplish in your life, but what you inspire others to do."

Unknown



POST-HARVEST INNOVATION PROGRAMME

DESIREÉ THOMPSON



On 17 September 2024, the Post-Harvest Innovation (PHI) Programme held its Steering Committee meeting at the HORTGRO Science offices on the Welgevallen Experimental farm in Stellenbosch. The meeting was followed by project presentations by five PHI researchers and a site visit to the nearby PHYLA HORTGRO phytosanitary facility, where four of the current PHI research and development (R&D) projects are being conducted.

To provide background: the PHI Programme is a public-private partnership between the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and Industry – with the Fresh Produce Exporters’ Forum (FPEF) as the implementing agent.

It is the mission of the PHI Programme to create a culture of innovation – by providing funding opportunities to deserving applicants that will creatively seek solutions for the technology gaps

identified in the fresh horticultural export value chain. This is accomplished through funding that the PHI Programme receives from the DSI – through its Sector Innovation Fund (SIF) – of which R&D project costs are matched in equal part by Industry.

The PHI Programme is currently in its fifth phase (PHI-5) – which commenced in April 2022 and concludes on 30 June 2026 – with HORTGRO Science, SATI, Subtrop/SAAGA, Cape Flora SA and Berries ZA as industry partners. Thirteen R&D projects are being conducted under PHI-5 at various research institutions, including ExperiCo, AgriSMART SA, Stellenbosch University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The PHI Programme provides exciting opportunities to students and interns. Focused on high-end skills development and transformation, a number of post-graduate students and interns, of which the majority are historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs), participate in selected R&D projects. These students and interns all benefit from PHI project funding – provided through bursaries, stipends, co-funding or salaries.



Dr James Mehl (Technical Specialist: Market Access & SAAGA, SALGA Research), Sunita Kalan (Sector and Local Innovation – Department of Science and Innovation), Dr Renate Smit and Dr Shelley Johnson at the PHYLA HORTGRO phytosanitary facility.

Dr Renate Smit – entomologist, researcher and manager at the PHYLA HORTGRO phytosanitary facility – was such a student beneficiary. She started her journey with the PHI Programme during a previous third phase of the Programme (PHI-3) when she participated as a PHI-funded MSc bursary student in the project, ‘CATTs as a post-harvest treatment for chill-sensitive plum cultivars and associated phytosanitary insect pests’ – led by Dr Shelley Johnson at Stellenbosch University (SU) for HORTGRO Science.



Interns at PHYLA, inoculating pome fruit for phytosanitary trials.

When the project, which was initiated in 2015, and her MSc studies concluded in 2017, her Master’s degree was upgraded by a panel of internal (SU) and external examiners to a PhD in Entomology – a remarkable feat! Thereafter, Dr Smit conducted her postdoctoral studies (under PH-4) on ethyl formate fumigation and how to upscale it to cold room level. During this project, which was led by Dr Johnson for HORTGRO at Stellenbosch University, the building of a fumigation cold room was initiated via PHI funding.

However, the cold room had to comply with specific governmental criteria and more funding was needed. It was also 2020 – businesses were closed and disruptions were caused due to the impact of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. These challenges prompted Dr Smit to submit a proposal to HORTGRO, requesting additional funding in order to build the intended fumigation cold room. Approval of this proposal subsequently enabled the PHYLA HORTGRO phytosanitary facility – officially launched in January 2023.

Today, the PHYLA facility provides opportunities for training, knowledge transfer and capacity building for



Ultra-low oxygen mixing box – designed by Dr Renate Smit, in collaboration with Josh Kreft of Gas At Site.

researchers and students at Stellenbosch University and other institutions. PHYLA also provides access to various insect colonies and access to world-class cold sterilisation and fumigation infrastructure.

The DSI and industry visit to PHYLA on 17 September, was initiated as part of the DSI's oversight role and due to the fact that four of the current R&D research projects under PHI-5 are being conducted at this phytosanitary facility:

- 'Cold disinfestation protocol development for oriental fruit fly in pome fruit.'
- 'Ultra-low oxygen and nitric oxide treatment for pests in pome and stone fruit.'
- 'Ozone fumigation as post-harvest phytosanitary treatment.'
- 'Ethyl formate fumigation and alternative application methods.'



Terence Asia explaining insect trials on codling and false codling moth.

Dr Johnson, Dr Smit and Terence Asia are part of the research team of the four projects, whilst two students (MSc and PhD) and one post-doctoral fellow are participating in some of these projects. A total of nine non-academic interns provide technical assistance of which at least three will receive a contract of employment from 1 October 2024 – as a result of their project involvement.



Marehette Liprini (Postdoctoral research fellow) in discussion with Sunita Kalan (DSI), Anton Kruger (FPEF CEO) and Marinda Roux (FPEF Financial Manager).

These successes bear testimony to the impact of the PHI Programme. Apart from serving as a platform to facilitate and support post-harvest research, development and innovation; the Programme provides opportunities and contributes to capacity building and skills development – to enhance the global competitiveness of the South African fresh horticultural export industry.



TRANSFORMATION

JOHANNES BRAND

The FPEF has a commitment and a vision for industry transformation – to facilitate a significant shift in the inclusion and sustainable participation of black South Africans within secondary agriculture in the fresh produce export value chain.

FPEF Graduate Placement programme

The FPEF's Graduate Placement programme is our flagship transformation programme, since we believe it has the greatest potential to transform our industry in the long term. The momentum that the programme has gained over the past few years was maintained in 2024, with fourteen black graduates finding employment in the fresh produce export industry.

Since the programme was launched in 2016, a total of 82 graduates have been appointed to positions within the industry. We are proud of the programme's high retention rate, with 69% of the graduates to date receiving either permanent employment or a contract extension – following their initial fixed-term contract period.

Agrijob, as a service provider to the FPEF, handles recruitment on behalf of the programme and provides a high service level. Agrijob meets with individual FPEF member companies to understand their needs before introducing them to suitable candidates. The FPEF covers the recruitment fees

and contributes R5 000 per month, for the first twelve months, towards the salaries of each graduate appointed.

Interaction amongst the graduates is important – to develop professional and social contacts, build relationships and to exchange information. Peer-to-peer networking is facilitated via a WhatsApp group, whilst the FPEF organises an annual networking event for the graduates. In October 2023, Fruitworks (FPEF member company) hosted the networking event for the second time. This event provided the perfect opportunity to profile the FPEF Graduate Placement programme to FPEF member companies, industry associations and government departments.



FPEF Graduate Networking event in October 2023.

Top of the Class Fruit Export Value Chain training programme

The Top of the Class (TOC) programme covers the fruit export value chain – from harvest to home. Although the TOC programme is mainly aimed at employees in junior to middle management within fruit export companies, pack houses and logistics companies; it is also a valuable training tool for emerging farmers and exporters.

Participants gain an excellent understanding of the entire value chain, together with additional knowledge and insight into their individual areas of responsibility. Training under the TOC programme covers topics such as quality management, compliance, cold chain management, primary production, packing and packaging; road, sea and air freight; documentation, consumers, markets and the role of exporters.

A total of 79 individuals completed the course in 2024, which brings the total number of people trained since the programme was initiated in 2004 to 1 376. During 2024, the programme was presented in an interactive, online format in May, whilst it is also scheduled for October – collectively for the training of 39 industry employees. The course was also presented at two FPEF member companies, covering a total of forty employees.



Fruitways employees during TOC training in August 2024.

Market access for emerging farmers and exporters

In January 2024, the FPEF Transformation Manager facilitated a training session to help prepare emerging fruit farmers from the Western Cape – sponsored by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) – to attend Fruit Logistica Berlin in 2024. The Western Cape Minister for Agriculture, Dr Ivan Meyer, also addressed the growers.



Farmers who attended Fruit Logistica Berlin, together with Dr Ivan Meyer, officials from the WCDoA and the FPEF Transformation Manager.

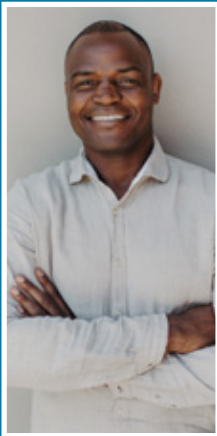
The FPEF, in collaboration with Partners in Agri Land Solutions (PALS) and the Koue Bokkeveld Opleidingsentrum, facilitated export market training for emerging farmers. There were two training events, both presented over two days in Ceres – in October 2023 and in September 2024.

These training sessions are focused on providing the farmers with a comprehensive overview of the export process, which is set into motion once the fruit leaves the farm. The training is intended to assist growers in understanding export economics, market dynamics and the role of export agents – to help strengthen relationships between farmers and export agents and to improve export market access.

In addition, the FPEF continues to assist aspiring and emerging exporters through a 'help desk' that guides them in becoming export ready, whilst focusing on risk management. The FPEF also provides emerging exporters with free membership (with full benefits) for a minimum period of two years.

FPEF annual Transformation Webinar

The FPEF hosted its annual Transformation Webinar on 19 September 2024. The goal of the webinar is to inspire and equip business leaders to lead proactive and effective transformation in their businesses. This year's speakers were Chiliboy Ralepelle – a former professional rugby player who is now involved in the fresh produce export trade, and Wandile Sihlobo – a well-known agricultural economist and author.



Chiliboy Ralepelle emphasised the importance of transformation within the South African agricultural sector – particularly in fresh produce exports. He emphasised the role of exporters in driving economic growth and creating opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities, especially rural farmers. By integrating these farmers into the supply chain and providing them with resources, training and market access; exporters can foster sustainability, inclusivity and innovation.

Mr Ralepelle shared his personal journey – from humble beginnings in a rural village to becoming a successful businessman – urging leaders to prioritise empowerment and collaboration for long-term success.

Drawing on lessons from sport and leadership, he advocates for inclusive growth that benefits all – ultimately helping to build a more prosperous and equitable future for South Africa.



Wandile Sihlobo highlighted the significant growth in the South African agricultural sector since 1994, with the domestic agricultural output doubling by 2022/2023. This expansion has been driven by technological advancements, improved farming practices and progressive trade policies, which positioned South Africa as a key player in global agriculture – ranking 32nd in the world in agricultural exports during 2023.

Despite these gains, challenges remain – particularly in ensuring that growth is inclusive and transformative. He underscored the dual nature of South African agriculture: a thriving commercial sector dominated by white farmers, versus a subsistence, non-commercial sector – primarily consisting of black farmers.

Whilst there are rising examples of successful black farmers, transformation in the sector has been slow with less than 10% of commercial agricultural production attributed to black farmers. Employment in agriculture has remained steady despite technological advances, with 920 000 workers employed in the industry by the end of 2023. Mr Sihlobo concluded by urging the government and the private sector to collaborate on crafting policies that promote inclusive growth – building on existing frameworks such as the National Development Plan and the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP).

associations and the compilation of an annual transformation report to keep the government informed in this regard.

The FPEF also serves on the Horticulture Sector Sub-Committee and the Sectoral Skills Committee of the Agricultural Sector Education Training Authority (AgriSETA), to represent the interests of FPEF members within the AgriSETA.

FPEF BEE certification

The FPEF achieved BEE compliance with level 7 recognition as a Qualifying Small Enterprise under the amended agricultural sector scorecard for specialised entities, following a BEE audit conducted in September 2024.

Government and industry collaboration

The FPEF remains active as a member of the Fruit Industry Value Chain Round Table (FIVCRT) Transformation Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to drive transformation – amongst Fruit SA member associations (HORTGRO, the CGA, SATI, Subtrop, Berries ZA and the FPEF) and various government departments – in an effective and coordinated manner. A key outcome of this initiative is the coordinated monitoring of transformation progress within Fruit SA member





FINANCIAL REPORT

MARINDA ROUX

2024 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Introduction

The 2024 annual financial statements of the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum (FPEF) have been independently audited by SDK Chartered Accountants (SA) and reflect a clear analysis of the financial position of the Forum as of 30 September 2024.

These statements have been prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small to Medium-sized Entities and are based upon appropriate accounting policies – consistently applied and supported by reasonable and prudent judgments and estimates.

Financial highlights

- Unqualified audit report.
- Net investment revenue: R1 136 003.
- Maintained a strong financial position through rigorous budget management, careful expense control and strategic resource allocation.

Financial management

The FPEF Board of Directors ensures that finances are managed with the highest standard of professionalism, accuracy and transparency. Comprehensive

management accounts are regularly presented to the Board, whilst concerns are promptly reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

Investment and utilisation of member contributions

We prioritise optimal utilisation of member contributions to achieve our objectives. Surplus funds are invested to maximise returns, as evidenced by the net investment revenue. Our investment strategy aims to balance risk and return, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Donor funds and project management

The FPEF manages donor funds from esteemed partners, including Tesco and various government departments, notably:

- Industry partners, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic) and member contributions - International trade fairs.
- Post-Harvest Innovation Programme, Phase 5:
- Total funding investment from the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) for the four-year programme (ending 31 March 2026) is R11 961 867. (Exclusive of VAT.)
- Research and development (R&D) projects: Funded 50/50 by the DSI and industry associations.
- Programme management costs, shared between the DSI, Industry and the FPEF.

Accountability and transparency

We account separately for the income and expenditure of the Post-Harvest Innovation Programme, ensuring streamlined auditing and minimised errors. The continued trust of our donors and members is a testament to our integrity and high standards.

Conclusion

The FPEF remains committed to responsible financial management, transparency and accountability. We appreciate the ongoing support of our members, donors and partners and look forward to continuing our work in promoting the South African fresh produce export industry.

Members may request a copy of the signed financial statements from our Auditors, SDK Chartered Accountants (SA) Dirk Truter dirk@sdkca.co.za or from the FPEF Accountant, Marinda Roux marinda@fpéf.co.za



Detailed Income Statement for the year ended 30 September 2024

	2024		
	R		
INCOME	19 865 195	FUNDING & GRANTS RAISED / RECEIVED	100 000
<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>		Donor Funds - Fruit Attraction Madrid Agri-Western Cape	100 000
FPEF MEMBERS	18 515 415	OTHER PROJECTS / MANAGED BY FPEF	217 794
Membership fees (including new member acquisition)	15 085 968	DSI - Department of Science & Innovation - PHI 5 (reported seperately)	
Export Directory publication (Adverts)	442 000	Tesco - Africa/Global Communities Fund	217 794
Trade Fairs (FPEF + Industry partners)	1 767 500		
Interest Std Bank / Stanlib re-investment	1 136 003		
Recoveries - various costs / Tesco management fee	73 711		
Sundry income (SA Fruit Journal / PPECB Board allowance)	10 233		
GRANTS / PROJECT FUNDING - dtic	1 031 986		
Reimbursement FL Asia	31 986		
Export Council grant	1 000 000		

EXPENDITURE 2024	22 105 811		
Agri-Hub industry contribution	502 197	Meetings/Board/AGM and other	189 523
Agri-Hub - technology upgrade	350 000	New member credit checks	8 476
Annual report	96 665	Post Harvest Innovation Programme	611 259
Audit - tax and secretarial	27 640	Printing and stationery	38 609
Audit fee	86 000	Rental - Regus / storage	214 250
Bad debt write off	12 705	Staff training	3 300
Bank charges	47 792	Subscriptions / membership fees / conferences	143 904
Compensation commissioner	36 637	Sundries	19 127
Consult: Legal & Mediation / HR / Lobby	162 944	Telephone (cellular)	25 110
Courier and postage	23 407	Tesco - Projects	4 308 965
Depreciation	36 585	Trade Fairs (Recovered - Industry R1 800 000)	2 897 478
Employees and contract employees	6 421 379	Transformation initiatives	1 545 856
Entertainment	9 322	Travel and accommodation: local	156 114
Export Directory	421 165	Travel and accommodation: overseas	480 940
Fruit SA - Export Council grant	1 000 000		
Fruit SA - Exporter contribution	644 010	NET SHORTFALL FOR THE YEAR	-2 240 615
Insurance	43 180	Plus: Funds transferred from Project Reserves	4 091 171
Internet, IT and computer maintenance	114 106	FPEF SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1 850 556
Market access	1 112 675		
Marketing materials - FPEF	18 883		
Market statistics and information	230 404		
Marketing forums and technical meetings	56 813		
Media platforms: web maintenance	8 391		

FRESH PRODUCE EXPORTERS' FORUM NPC
(registration number: 1998/018451/08)

Income Statement for the Post-Harvest Innovation Programme: PHI-5
for the year ended 30 September 2024

PHASE 5	2024
	R
INCOME	9 469 188
DSI (Department of Science & Innovation) GRANT	5 553 158
CONTRIBUTIONS (Industry partners)	3 614 030
Interest income	302 000
EXPENDITURE	7 322 019
Research and development projects	5 860 465
Programme management/implementation	1 461 554
NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	2 147 169

FPEF BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mark Jensen
(Chairman)



Adolf Kieviet
(Vice-Chairman)



Hans Boyum



Gary Britz



Awie de Jager



Chris Engelbrecht



Marietjie Franzsen



Cyril Julius



Pedré Koekemoer



Nico Kotze



Snyman Kritzinger



Iain McIntosh



Hannes Nieuwoudt



Roelf Pienaar



Craig Schaefer



Liezl Gelderblom
(Ex officio)



Luke Govender
(Ex officio)



Francois Knowles
(Ex officio)

FPEF STAFF MEMBERS



Anton Kruger (CEO)



Werner van Rooyen (COO)



Antoinette van Heerden



Marletta Kellerman



Desirée Thompson



Johannes Brand



Marinda Roux



Claudia Walklett

EXPORTER MEMBERS

Access Farms
Afrigold SA
ALG Marketing
Alliance Fruit
AM Fresh South Africa
Angon Fruit
A.S. Viljoen & Seuns Boerdery
Banhoek Fruit Packers
Berryworld South Africa
Bet-El Fruits
Betko Fresh Produce
Bono Farm Management
Boschkrans Boerdery
C Fruit
Cape Five Export SA
Capespan South Africa
CitrX
Core Fruit
De Keur Marketing
Delecta Fruit
Dibanisa Fruit
DKI Fruit Marketing

Dole South Africa
Down South
Du Toit Agri
ELE Trading
Epic Fruit Exporters
Everseason
EXSA
Favourite Fresh Export
Fresh 365 International
Freshgold SA Exports
Freshgro Citrus Growers
Freshness First
Fresh-Pride SA
Freshworld
Fruit Heart Exporters
FruitOne
Fruitways Marketing
Fruitworks
FVC International
GF Marketing
Global Pacific Produce SA
Good Hope Fruit

Good Hope Marketing
Grape Alliance Marketing
GrapeHub
Green Marketing International
Groep 91 Uitvoer
Growers by Nature
Grown4U
G.S. Schoonbee Landgoed
HNP Marketing
Icon Fruit
Ideafruit Export
Impala Citrus
In2Fruit
In Season Marketing
Internode Marketing Company & Logistics
Iris Fresh
Jo-Rie Products
JWM Asia South Africa
Karpus Exports
Karsten Marketing
Kat River Citrus Primary (KATCO)
Khula Fresh

EXPORTER MEMBERS

Kingfisher Fruits	Pitto	The Grape Company
Komati Fruit	Pomona Fruit	Toro Fruit
Kromco	Pure Legacy	Triple D Farms
Laeveld Sitrus	Rainbow Export	Tru-Cape Fruit Marketing
Lange Farms	Remhoogte Boerdery	Twente Partners South Africa
Le Roux Fruit Exporters	SAFPRO	Unichoice Produce Direct
Letaba Estates	SAFRESCO	Unifrutti SA
Lona Citrus	Samapro Trading	United Exports South Africa
Lucerne Fresh	SAPEX Exports	Van Doorn Citrus
Mahela Group	Seaboard International Trading Company	Vanguard International USA
Market Demand Fruits	Sonlia Marketing	Venganix
Masterclass International	Southern Cross Marketing and Management	VidaFruit
Modderdrift	Southern Fruit Growers	Vintage Group
Mooigezicht Estates	Southern Fruit Trading	Vrugteboom SA
Mouton Citrus	SRCC Marketing	Westfalia Marketing Africa
Muka-Tangi Farming Operations t/a Easy Farm	Star South Fruits	Wolseley Fruit Packers
Niche Fruit	Stargrow Fruit Marketing	WP Fresh Distributors
Nine Fruits Exports	Stems Fruit	XTreme International
Orex Export	Suiderland Plase	Yukon International
Patensie Citrus	Swellenfruit Packing	Zest Fruit
	The Fruit Farm Group South Africa	Zonnehaven

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Adagin Technologies

African Port Logistics & Infrastructure t/a Khold

APL Cartons

CH Logistics

Citricom IP

Citrogold

Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA)

ClemenGold International

Contour Logistics

CTI Coldstore

DHL Global Forwarding SA

Energy Partners Refrigeration

Ethekwini Cold Stores

FPT Group

GoGlobal Group

Hapag-Lloyd Africa

Hortec

Imperial Clearing and Forwarding South Africa

Integrated Fruit Marketing

Laeveld Agrochem Marble Hall

LCL Logistics Southern Africa

Maersk South Africa

Morgan Cargo

Morreto Trade

Mpact

Ocean Network Express (ONE) South Africa

Paltrack

PCA Logistics

Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB)

Plus 0

Portfreight

Potatoes South Africa

Producer Ally

Prophet Systems SA

SAFT Group

Sappi Southern Africa

The SPOT

Unitec South Africa

ZZ2





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