



KEEPING IT FRESH



News from the FPEF – 05 March 2025

Dear FPEF Members,

Welcome to the first edition of our March 2025 newsletter! This edition provides a summary of recent events and communications in which we have been involved to serve you better.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 96% of our members who have already paid their membership fees—your contributions enable us to participate in key forums, meetings, and platforms to ensure our industry's “voice” is heard. We encourage the remaining 4% to settle their invoices soon.

The FPEF continues to gain recognition from government officials and Ministers as the representative body for the fresh produce export industry. This is evident in our invitations to high-level events with Ministers, Embassies, and private sector stakeholders. You can read more about these engagements later in the newsletter.

A key part of our role is to enhance and maintain the visibility of our industry on the international stage, particularly by organizing, co-funding, and participating in trade shows. We frequently receive invitations to attend new trade shows, including those in countries where we have not yet participated. When evaluating such opportunities, we carefully assess the potential impact before deciding on our involvement. In most cases we are invited to be an observer at such events.



Anton Kruger with Harold Manamela: Regional Manager Export Promotion: Middle East Region, dtic

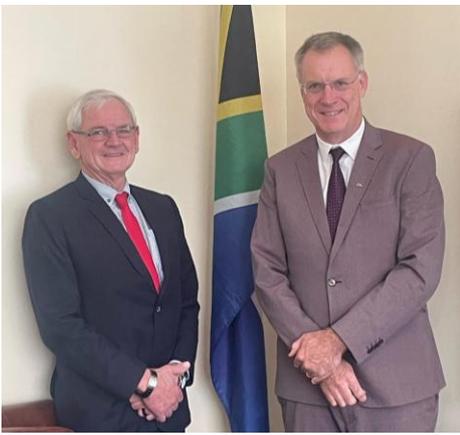


A recent example is **GULFOOD**, held in **Dubai from 17 to 21 February**. While we participated in this event 10 years ago, past inquiries were primarily focused on processed fruit (mainly frozen). However, we are now seeing increased interest in fresh produce. As a result, the event organizers are launching **GULFGREEN** in **2026**, with an expanded fresh produce section. This year’s event provided us with valuable networking opportunities with exhibitors and organizers.

Next year, **GULFGREEN** is scheduled for **26 to 30 January**, closely followed by **Fruit Logistica Berlin**. Given that we will likely need to allocate funding for and/or co-fund Fruit Logistica, we may not have a large stand at GULFGREEN, but we are committed to ensuring South African representation.



- Market Access
- Government Engagement
- Export process assistance
- Provide Information
- Transformation
- Research, Development and Innovation



FPEF CEO, Mr Anton Kruger and Mr Johan Oberholzer, Ambassador Abu Dhabi

During our international visits, we always strive to connect with South African Ambassadors and Embassy staff. While attending GULFOOD, we had the opportunity to meet the newly appointed **Ambassador in Abu Dhabi, Mr Johan Oberholzer**, who is already familiar with our industry from his previous posting in Prague.

A key point raised by Ambassador Oberholzer—and echoed by all South African Embassies—is the importance of FPEF members visiting their local SA Embassy for a meet-and-greet when traveling abroad. If you require embassy contact details, we would be happy to assist.

TRANSFORMATION

FPEF Young Professionals Network (YPN)

The **FPEF YPN** was established in 2024 to stimulate the personal and career development of young professionals in the industry appointed through the FPEF’s graduate programme. The 2025 FPEF YPN volunteer working group met on Saturday the 15th of March to plan an exciting range of activities and initiatives for the year including a workshop to develop practical AI skills to use in the workplace, a team building and social event involving kayaking and paddle boarding, a big networking event in October and the establishment of a peer-to-peer support network. Watch this space.



The **FPEF Export Directory 2025** is now available on the **FPEF website** - www.fpef.co.za.

LOGISTICS & OPERATIONS

Fruit SA Delegation visit Minister Creecy

The **Fruit SA delegations** met with the **Minister of Transport, Barbara Creecy** on **27 February 2025** as part of a joint



effort to foster collaboration and partnership between industry and government.

The FPEF took the opportunity to highlight pertinent issues with the Minister.

The importance of policy reform and aligning reforms to increase competitiveness in South African ports and terminals, was highlighted.

The prioritisation of rail is evident from a national perspective and the recent revision to the Rail Network Statement (Jan 2025) to increase competition and minimise characteristics of monopolies, is welcomed.

The Department of Transport reported to potentially embark on a Request for Information (RFI) process, around mid-March, to obtain information on the entire port of Durban (not only individual terminals) and with a focus on rail, especially minerals, among networks between Saldanha, Richards Bay, Coega, Durban. This seems to be the preferred method of the Department of Transport, in acquiring information before developing policy, and engaging via a RFI process with stakeholders.

There seems to be a strong view on a process to reform Transnet as a modern fit for purpose organisation. However, we are concerned that the corporatization of the port system (including terminals) will potentially not realise. The significant proportion of debt in the balance sheet of Transnet and Transnet Port Terminal's (TPT's) share of the balance sheet debt, might potentially derail efforts.

From a fruit export and partnership perspective, we highlighted existing private sector participation initiatives between industry and Transnet Port Terminals in Cape Town, adding generating capacity to support terminal operations during the deciduous season.

Important Notice:

The amended list for **table grape exports to Israel during 2024-25** was circulated to all members. Please let claudia@fpef.co.za know if you did not receive it.

This event will explore the **future of trade in South Africa’s agricultural sector under the context of the G20**



framework, addressing critical issues i.e. port logistics, market access, and trade barriers. We aim to discuss actionable solutions that align with G20 objectives, with a focus on enhancing trade, improving logistics, and fostering private-public collaboration.

Register now to join this exciting event with insightful discussions to follow

Date: 06 March 2025 @ 17H00 – 20H00 (Cape Town)

Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/KL3ShEEsiY?origin=lprLink>

Registered individuals will receive a confirmation email with details of logistics and the venue.

Citrus black spot – Possible prolonging of EU temporary measures on citrus fruit from certain countries

The Fresh Produce Exporters’ Forum (FPEF) formally submitted a response to an AGRINFO notice of the European Commission proposal to prolong EU temporary measures related to citrus black spot for citrus fruits imported from Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

Stakeholders had an opportunity to comment on the draft Regulation via the EU’s “Have your say consultation” until **17 February 2025**.

South Africa has continuously demonstrated willingness and dedication to complying with the European Union *P. citricarpa* regulations. However, the Fresh Produce Exporters' Forum contends that the extension of the Commission Implementing Regulation 2022/632 is arbitrary, disproportionate, unconscionable, and the incorrect approach.

Registered exporter lists for the export of table grapes to the Philippines

The pest risk analysis process for Table Grapes to Philippines is completed. Provisional registrations were done via DALRRD and the E Cert system for production units, Pack houses and South African exporters during 2024, prior to final market access negotiations. There were three registration lists supplied by the National Plant Protection Organisation of South Africa (NPPOZA) to the Bureau of Plant Inspection (BPI) – Philippines before the final negotiations for market access of table grapes exported to the Philippines.

The draft bilateral agreement between South Africa and BPI was finalised in principle, and the wording was publicized on 21 December 2024 and became effective 05 January 2025 after a mandatory 15-day period. It appears that the process of Philippine importers registering at the BPI for a plant import permit is still ongoing. Exporters wishing to export next season (or this season), must please engage the FPEF and their importer, on the first consignment of table grapes to the Philippines.

Deciduous season: Port of Cape Town

To date the Cape Town Container Terminal recorded more than 200 hours of wind delays during the month of February resulting in 12 vessels at anchor on the 17th of February. One week later the number of vessels at anchor reduced to 7 as the recovery plan called for management on the ground, reduced internal meetings and to divert vessels to the Multi-Purpose Terminal when feasible. The recovery plan is progressing well even though the terminal’s productivity was negatively impacted by excessive equipment breakdowns. Three additional technicians from other regions will join the Cape Town technical team and two Empty handlers will be on loan from Durban terminals.



Market Access

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Citrus Pre-Season Workshops 2025

A reminder to all FPEF members regarding mandatory attendance at one of these workshops should you intend to export to the EU (pack house managers, cold stores, exporters and clearing agents). FPEF will participate in the Cape Town session, and we look forward to meeting our members that will attend. If you have not received the communication, please let us know. Herewith the schedule to the workshops:

2025 CITRUS PRE-SEASON WORKSHOPS				
	Region	Time	Date	Venue
1	Eastern Cape	10h00	11 March 2025	Africanos / Virtual
2	Robertson	09h00	18 March 2025	Virtual
3	Citrusdal	09h00	19 March 2025	Citrusdal Country lodge
4	Paarl & Ceres	10h00	20 March 2025	Virtual
5	Nelspruit	10h00	24 March 2025	ARC-TSC
6	Hoedspruit	10h00	25 March 2025	Blue Mountain
7	Tzaneen	10h00	26 March 2025	Hotel@Tzaneen
8	Groblersdal	10h00	27 March 2025	Loskop Valley
9	Kakamas	09h00	01 April 2025	Virtual
10	Cape Town	09h00	03 April 2025	The Academia
11	Durban	09h00	8 April 2025	Durban Jewish Club

Annual Port of Cape Town Stakeholder Dialogue

Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr Ivan Meyer, invited stakeholders to the annual Port of Cape Town stakeholder dialogue. The minister opened the session underscoring the theme; **Cape Town port – facilitating growth and jobs.**

Saul Musker Director of Strategy and Delivery Support in the Private Office of the President of South Africa gave a strategic overview of operation Vulindlela Phase 1 that has been completed and the following goals of Phase 2;

- Complete the restructuring of Transnet and creating an independent National Ports Authority and Rail Infrastructure Management
- Enable open access to the freight rail network
- Introduce Private Sector Participation in ports and Rail through a dedicated PSP unit
- Establish the Transport Economic regulator
- Finalize the National Rail Bill

He elaborated on the Public Sector Participation (PSP) – *“The unit will be housed in the Department of Transport. The unit is being built up as we speak and will identify transactions, properly sequencing these transactions so they do not fail and build confidence.”*



Saul Musker - Director of Strategy and Delivery Support in the Private Office of the President of South Africa

POST-HARVEST INNOVATION PROGRAMME

DSTI and Industry visit to PHYLA Hortgro to accommodate DDG

The Post-Harvest Innovation (PHI) Programme – which is a public-private partnership between the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) and the FPEF – **contributed to the establishment of the Hortgro phytosanitary laboratory, known as PHYLA**. To illustrate the impact of the PHI Programme, a DSTI and Industry site visit to the PHYLA Hortgro facility, where four of the current PHI research projects are being conducted, took place on **17 September 2024**.

The event was so successful that the DSTI requested a follow-up visit to include **Dr Mmboneni Muofhe – Deputy Director-General (DDG)** of the DSTI. As a result, the FPEF – in collaboration with Hortgro – arranged a visit and tour of the facility on **27 February 2025**.

Upon arrival at the Welgevallen Experimental farm in Stellenbosch, the Hortgro and Stellenbosch University (SU) teams welcomed the DSTI and FPEF representatives to the PHYLA Hortgro facility. **Dr Minette Karsten** provided an overview of PHYLA, after which **Dr Renate Smit** conducted a tour of the facility.

PHYLA overview

The PHYLA Hortgro phytosanitary facility officially opened in January 2023. Research at PHYLA is managed by Dr Renate Smit and aims to improve existing post-harvest phytosanitary treatments and develop alternative/new treatments where necessary – in order to ensure maintenance of existing export markets and gain access to new international markets.

The value of PHYLA is the ability to address phytosanitary pest concerns and explore fruit quality challenges, offering an integrated approach to the industry. PHYLA consists of an insectarium set-up to rear major insect pests, a ‘wet’ laboratory for fruit inoculations and fruit quality measurements, four cold rooms, a fumigation room and a new wing dedicated to fruit fly. Close collaboration with Stellenbosch University allows the facility to train students, to provide insects to projects funded by other industries, and provides support to related Hortgro projects.

Background

The initial post-harvest fumigation work, conducted by Dr Renate Smit and Dr Shelley Johnson, explored the use of ethyl formate (EF) and was co-funded by the Post-Harvest Innovation Programme and Hortgro. The outcomes from the research highlighted the need for a facility such as PHYLA – in order to expand on the development of EF fumigation as a phytosanitary treatment and its potential commercial implementation, as well as the development of other technologies using alternative fumigants, modified atmospheres and cold treatment for the deciduous fruit industry.

In addition to the EF work, PHI funding has also supported research at PHYLA to examine cold sterilisation regimes, the use of modified atmosphere (through low oxygen) and the addition of fumigants such as nitric oxide – to control pests such as false codling moth – for the deciduous fruit industry. Dr Smit also explored the potential of technologies such as ozone, whilst PHI funding has contributed to the development of skills and capacity at various levels.

Conclusion

The visit concluded with refreshments at the nearby Hortgro Science offices. The Hortgro and SU teams gifted the DSTI representatives with export fruit 'care packages', whilst **Anton Kruger** (FPEF CEO) presented copies of the 2025 FPEF Export Directory to the DSTI team. He also provided an overview of the South African fresh fruit export industry and emphasised the importance of market access and post-harvest research on quarantine pests such as false codling moth (FCM), which is unique to South Africa and can lead to the rejection of entire fruit export shipments.

In response, the DSTI team expressed their gratitude to all involved, whilst the DDG described the event as an 'eye-opener'.



At the PHYLA Hortgro facility on 27 February 2025:

Ms Sunita Kalan (Director: Sector and Local Innovation – DSTI), ***Ms Buliswa Omodona*** (PA of DSTI DDG),
Dr Renate Smit (Entomologist, researcher and manager at PHYLA Hortgro),
Dr Minette Karsten (Crop Protection programme manager: Hortgro/SU), ***Dr Mmboneni Muofhe*** (DDG of the DSTI),
Dr Shelley Johnson (Phytosanitary entomology and Market access specialist: Hortgro/SU),
Mr Anton Kruger (FPEF CEO) and ***Ms Desireé Thompson*** (PHI Programme manager).

Until next time,
Anton Kruger