



South Africa could miss citrus export boom due to port issues

Demand for citrus fruits has been booming throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, but South Africa's exports industry, may miss out on this boom. Presently, millions of tons of fruit stand uncollected in cold storage at the Durban port and local growers are troubled about port backlogs potentially costing them sales revenue in this surge for citrus.

Hannes de Waal, vice-chair of the Citrus Growers Association in South Africa: "The problems with the ports really have been coming over a very long time and, as recent articles have pointed out, it's very much the problem with all, let's say, semi-government departments or whatever you want to call them."

"We've been very supportive of Transnet management. We've built a very good relationship with them, but an internal memo or a newsletter to our growers was leaked to the press, and that set off a series or quite a few articles that I have seen. These problems come over a very, very long time. At the same time the growth in the citrus industry has been enormous. The demand that you spoke about is something that we've seen over a very long time. We've seen a peak, especially in last year's Covid period – this year not. The sales are not as strong, but our growth is strong and unfortunately or fortunately that is something that we have to keep going."

"We are in the super-fast-moving consumer goods [sector]. We cannot miss a sales week, and we have impressed both on Transnet and on government in the past that this is something that obviously has to be fixed – not only for our industry, but also for the country."

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