

## **TPT WAY ABOVE CITRUS EXPORT TARGETS NATIONWIDE**

***[Durban – Wednesday, 22 July 2020]*** Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) is tracking ahead of a planned 13% citrus export volume increase in 2020 across four of its 19 terminals. In the face of COVID19, actual citrus volumes are 29.4% higher across all terminals combined when compared to prior year volumes.

“We are halfway through the citrus season and despite the well documented challenge of COVID 19 – TPT is exceeding the reefer targets having prepared well ahead,” said General Manager: Sales and New Business Development Siyabulela Mhlaluka. He added that annually, the most critical element of terminal preparations was the availability of equipment, having sufficient plug points and human resources. “We are in continuing discussions with customers to maximise the 24-hour operations that we run across our terminals to limit congestion at peak hours for better cargo flow,” said Mhlaluka.

The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal citrus season ends in October after six months while the Western Cape fruit season resumes in November. Actual citrus volumes are 20.2% higher at the Cape Town Container Terminal, 31.2% higher at the Durban Container Terminals and 32.3% higher than prior year volumes at the Ngqura and Port Elizabeth Container Terminals.

Forming about 55% of South Africa’s fruit production, citrus fruits are exported in refrigerated containers called reefers to over 100 countries mainly in the European Union (EU), Russia, United States of America (USA) and Mediterranean countries. Valencia oranges make up the biggest portion of the citrus export market at 35%, followed by navel oranges (19%), lemons (18%), soft citrus (16%), and grapefruit (12%).

The Port Elizabeth Container Terminal’s (PECT) recent acquisition of two mobile harbour cranes that have been handed over to Operations is additional capacity to the existing two cranes. In preparation for the season, the Ngqura Container Terminal (NCT) had acquired 450 additional plug points. “The recruitment of seasonal workers continues and in total, PECT has a total of 1000 reefer plug points, NCT 2100, the Durban Container Terminals Pier

1 will have 1218 and Pier 2 with 1920” said Mhlaluka. He added that the key factor now lay in the seamless execution of a plan that saw all stakeholders adhering to effective and efficient gate arrival as TPT sets aside priority services for the reefer containers. Before the citrus season is over, the Durban Container Terminals will have taken delivery of 23 straddle carriers to employ in its operations.

According to the Citrus Growers Association’s (CGA), the annual growth is attributed to new orchards coming into production and good rains across some regions. To date, there has been a higher output of lemons across the Northern, Eastern and Western Cape. While COVID19 and inclement weather posed some serious challenges especially in availability of human resources, Mhlaluka said TPT was geared up for a rather productive 2020-reefer season. “The reality of the matter is that we are all part of communities and one confirmed positive case has serious impact. However, our efforts to date give us confidence in our ability to ensure a successful season,” said Mhlaluka.

As a provider of a much-needed service, TPT continues to prioritise the safety and health of its employees through standard prevention measures. These include provision of sanitisers, masks, gloves, counselling services to allay fear; frequent disinfecting of commonly used spaces and equipment at shift change; temperature testing, constant communication and education.

## **Ends**

### **Notes to editor:**

Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) is South Africa’s leading terminal operator responsible for loading and offloading cargo aboard vessels calling the seven South African ports. Boasting a staff compliment of over 9000 across 16 sea terminals and 3 inland terminals, TPT’s operations target four major market sectors namely: automotive, containers, bulk and break bulk. Current plans are focused on geographic expansion, service innovation and diversification aided by competitive approaches hinted by the fourth industrial revolution.

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