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Snappy logistics for SA citrus from Capespan Exports

For this season, Capespan Exports has ensured that South African citrus enjoys a better value chain from orchard to store. Not only is the company increasing on-farm container loading, which is quicker and cheaper, but it's also stepping up container train volumes, which is up to R2-50 per carton cheaper.

Said Capespan Exports Operations general manager Deon Joubert, "In addition, we're packing to vessels, not weeks. Basically, this implies that we fill the contracted space, allowing service providers to be efficient and resulting in sustainable lower rates. We contract for fixed volumes a year in advance. With this responsibility, we try to fill that volume. But, if we can't, the provider is notified well in advance."

By contracting long-term dependable vessel space, Capespan Exports deals with reliable partners to provide regular weekly fruit lifts, resulting in less dwell. Joubert stressed that long-term planning and fulfilling commitments ensured better returns to both parties. Plus, dedicated depots and transporters meant a speedier turnaround and first-rate service.

He explained that Russia, Japan and the Middle East traditionally had much longer storage times than Europe or the UK. "We've managed to turn this around, supplying smaller and more regular parcels. Thus, the product arrives in much better shape. Apart from improved client service, this impacts positively on grower payments because we don't have to pay for lengthy storage periods."

As a cheaper alternative for getting fruit to the harbour, he expected a considerable increase in train container volumes for the 2009 citrus season.

Last year, Capespan Exports achieved: pro-rated shipping contracts for each service provider based on the company's annual volumes; an even greater swing to containers; utilisation of contracted weekly allocations to shipping lines; on-farm container loading; enhanced truck turn-around efficiency by expanding the Durban truck stop; and a dwell improvement.

"We're fortunate in being able to influence growers' income by designing shorter and more cost-effective supply chain solutions. However, Capespan Exports' ideas can only be implemented through the seamless integration of supply chain processes with cooperation by growers and shipping colleagues," Joubert concluded.

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