



By Fred Meintjes

Tuesday 18th June 2019, 11:57 GMT

## South Africa welcomes China success



South African citrus industry celebrates the arrival of the first of a series of breakbulk shipments to China

**T**he landmark first consignment of break bulk shipments of South African citrus fruit has successfully been discharged in the Chinese port of in Shanghai.

"The Baltic Summer left Durban with great fanfare four weeks ago," said the CGA's Justin Chadwick. "This week she arrived in Shanghai with a reception that only the Chinese can give. Whereas the South African Minister of Agriculture saw her off in Durban, the South African Consular General in Shanghai, Ms Mpho Hlahla, welcomed the Baltic Summer in Shanghai."

Much has been riding on the success of this first shipments which was co-loaded for Japanese and Chinese Customers.

In the wake of the successful loading in the port of Durban CGA spokesman Mitchel Brooke announced that eight further shipments were planned.

Getting permission for breakbulk shipments was a long process, with the South Africans having to convince the

Chinese authorities that the strict protocols could be adhered to during shipping.

Co-loading for Japan and China fitted in well with the South African logistical plans because the sterri-period for Japan is somewhat shorter than for China. The Baltic Summer therefore discharged in three Japanese ports first before moving on to China.

The arrival and discharging was witnessed by the South African Agricultural Attaché Mashudu Silimela, who reported that all went well with the shipment of the fruit.

Mashudu confirmed that there was a thorough review by the Chinese authorities of the temperature readings and an inspection of the vessel, which was all in order. "The fruit looks so beautiful and also has a great taste."

Meanwhile, the CGA revealed that all South African citrus sectors are lagging behind the 2018 shipment programme in terms of volumes packed and passed for export.

"The prediction now stands at 2 per cent less than 2018's record crop, and 3 per cent less than the original estimate. Valencia packing will now start to increase and as the fruit is harvested the Valencia Focus Group will be able to update their prediction."

South Africa is now expected to ship 132.8m cartons of citrus with all the sectors showing reductions.

Grapefruit now stands at 15.5m cartons compared to the forecast of 17.1m cartons, soft citrus at 17.8m compared with 18.3m, lemons at 21.4m compared with 22m and navels at 25.7m compared to 26.9m cartons previously forecasted.

At the start of the Valencia crop, the biggest of the South African citrus categories, this category shows a reduction from 52.9m cartons to 52.4m.

One leading exporter said that, in a sense, the export season is only now getting underway. "It is like a cricket game and we have to bat well until the end!"

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<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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