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By Fred Meintjes

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## Shipping decisions aid apple industry

### Late-season South African apple shipping programme to Europe on track as normal schedules are being restored



**T**he months of August and early September are an important shipping period for South African apple exporters entering the European and UK markets.

Due to additional duties being levied on arrivals after mid-October, the South Africans have developed a system of 'just in time' shipments which are meticulously planned between shippers and receivers.

Shipping sources in Cape Town have confirmed that they would now again include the port in their normal schedules between Europe and South Africa.

Calls at Cape Town were previously suspended due to delays in the port, and exporters were forced to transfer fruit overland to Port Elizabeth or to use West African schedules.

Mike Economo of MSC says vessels will during the next two weeks again start

calling at the Cape and this will allow exporters to meet the October duty deadlines.

"In order to supply in this late marketing window, it needs carefully planning and cooperation between exporters and receivers," said Dennegeur's Stefan Beukes. "Receivers normally switch over to the European new season fruit from September and October and arriving too late could be disastrous."

The news that last season's European crop has been cleared from coldstores early has boosted confidence for South African apple sales in what they call the 'late season' in Europe.

This year is even more important given the effect of Covid-19 and economic challenges in the African market.

Despite an unsettled export year, the South African apple industry is still on track to ship a record volume of over 35.2m cartons. This is 4 per cent up on last

year and also beats the previous record shipment of just over 34m cartons in 2016.

While two leading categories, Golden Delicious and Royal Gala/Gala increased in volumes this season, Granny Smith, the third biggest category, declined.

It is interesting to note that new categories Joya and Kanzi showed significant increases this season. There are also a whole host of other new varieties at this stage only classified as 'Other' which increased significantly. The volume of 'other' varieties is often a clear indication of change in the category profile.