

Multi-sector cooperation turns tide for South African export logistics with record citrus volumes shipped

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 2 November 2025

Multi-sector planning and cooperation has transformed South Africa's export logistics performance, with the citrus industry achieving record export volumes and ports delivering improved efficiency through new equipment and operational changes



Multi sector planning and cooperation involving government agencies and the private sector has turned the tide in the South African export logistics sector.

This has resulted in logistics operational efficiencies that are set to pull the sector out of the decline of the past few years.

These improvements are being seen in port facilities, road and rail initiatives and the emergence of cross-sector cooperation.

The South African table grape industry said that the implementation of its logistics model has brought about great improvements, and the South African citrus sector noted it has been able to ship a record export volume this year without many problems.

“At the start of the 2025 citrus export season, the outlook for logistics was a concern for the citrus industry,” said Mitchell Brooke, logistics development manager at the Citrus Growers’ Association.

“For many in the sector, logistics remained one of the most significant constraints on our ability to compete globally.

“But now, as we reach the end of our citrus export season, we can report improved efficiency,” he noted.

Citrus exports have been processed at ports without much delay, especially at the Port of Durban.

“The season was also unique in its collaborative nature,” Brooke continued. “There was a singular focus among all role-players in the logistics value chain – including the private sector – to make sure our growers got their fruit to market.”

This year has been a great example of how the collective actions of many stakeholders contribute to the industry’s ambitious growth strategy, he said.

“Thanks to new orchards coming into production, the citrus industry can create 100,000 new jobs over the next seven years, but only if we can move our perishable produce in a timely way to the over 100 foreign markets that enjoy South Africa’s high-quality citrus.”

Significantly this year, Transnet Port Terminals managed to increase throughput at ports through investment in new equipment and improvements in its operational model.

“The initiation of incentives that were aligned to productivity had a marked effect on efficiency,” Brooke confirmed.

“A total of 115,000 40ft-equivalent containers were moved, up from 94,000 containers last year. Also, the specialised reefer vessels (SRVs) shipped 220,000 pallets, up from 200,000.

“Not only did most of our fruit leave for overseas markets on time, but the Cape Town port was even able to support the slightly truncated US shipping season – as growers increased their shipments in advance of the imposition of a 30 per cent tariff by the US in August,” he said.

In addition to Transnet, the actions of shipping lines also assisted in a smooth season.

Due to a higher demand for refrigerated containers, a shortage was experienced for four weeks.

Shipping lines responded to industry demand and supplied containers to ensure shipments.

“In fact, 2025 stands out as a season in which collaboration contributed massively to overcoming many foreseeable constraints,” Brooke added.

“An informed and concerted value chain was seen in action – from trucking to cold storage, from orchards to ports, even including the rail network.”

