

## What drives the success of South Africa's citrus program to the US?

The 25th season of shipping citrus from South Africa to the USA came to a close in October. Altogether, +/- 100,000 pallets of citrus were shipped to the US market this season. "I can honestly say that I think this is the best export program in South Africa," says Alex van Drimmelen with Seatrade. The program not only includes growers and importers, but also all service partners. "We all know each other and communicate well, which makes it a very successful program," he said. "It's not the norm in the industry nor in the world that players throughout the value chain come together and make a program like this possible as if it's second nature," added Gerrit van der Merwe of ALG Estates.

What drives the success of the program? "It is a program that is very well managed," says Ockert Henning with SAFT. "We've seen that our ability to consistently deliver and make sure that our customers get fresh weekly supply has set us apart as a reliable partner for our customers in the US," commented Boet Mouton of Mouton Citrus.



*Partners involved in the Summer Citrus from South Africa program.*

### Close communication

It can be concluded that collaboration and transparent communication are the keys to the success of the program. "There is close communication between all the parties involved, which results in efficiency," said Paulo Franco with FPT Group. In addition to a high level of communication, the container program into Philadelphia also contributes to the success of the program. "With containers arriving into the Northeast, it helps us get product to consumers quicker," said Erin Meder with Capespan North America.

The different partners are looking forward to continuing their collaboration and hope to grow the program even further. "It is an important program for us as South Africa complements our programs with national chains during summertime," shared Peter Anderson with Seald Sweet International. The program enables a seamless approach to marketing and retailing.

"We are blessed to be able to look back on another successful season," said Suhanra Conradie with Summer Citrus from South Africa. There is always a dependence on weather for production, loading of

the vessels, etc. “However, we are happy and satisfied that we have long-term sustainable shipping options into the United States.”

“It’s unbelievable that we’ve been able to do it from South Africa, so far away,” finished Mayda Sotomayor of Seald Sweet. “It is one of my proudest career moments to say that I started in South African citrus right when I started at Seald Sweet and the program has continued on.”

For more information:

Suhanra Conradie

**Summer Citrus from South Africa**

[suhanra@summercitrus.com](mailto:suhanra@summercitrus.com)

[www.summercitrus.com](http://www.summercitrus.com)

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Author: [Marieke Hemmes](#)

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