

**PRESS STATEMENT BY MITCHELL BROOKE**  
**CITRUS GROWERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**  
**18 May 2021**

**World's largest specialist reefer ship arrives in SA to transport record citrus volumes abroad**

On Friday, a delegation from the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) visited the specialised reefer ship 'MV Cool Eagle', which arrived last week at the Durban port. Chartered by the Reefer Alliance, the MV Cool Eagle is one of a series of five ships that are the largest specialised reefers vessels in the world. This is the first time one of these new generation reefer ships has visited South Africa and is thus a truly historic moment for the citrus industry and the country as a whole .

MV Cool Eagle's has arrived in order to meet increasing export demand of South Africa's citrus produce. Citrus growers are expected to export a record breaking 163 million cartons of citrus during the 2021 export season translating into more job opportunities, foreign exchange revenue and will contribute towards national government's goal of increased agricultural exports over the next few years.

The MV Cool Eagle is built to carry roughly 6,000 high cube pallets of citrus in 342 reefer containers on deck and 7,200 high cube pallets below deck. This equates to 1.2 million cartons of citrus. The citrus will be transported to other export markets from Rotterdam, the Netherlands and from St. Petersburg in Russia.

Unlike container ships, which transport individual refrigerated containers, specialised reefer ships have insulated holds that can be adjusted according to the types of cargo being shipped. Recently, the World Bank released a report, which found that South Africa's container terminals are the most inefficient when compared to close to 400 terminals across the world. These inefficiencies have resulted in container ships taking two-thirds longer to clear our country's ports than reefer vessels, which typically arrive at export markets in Europe a week or two ahead of container vessels. These reefer ships therefore guarantee better quality fruit reaching key markets, which will help South African growers achieve greater market access for their citrus in the future.

Citrus exports are expected to grow by a further 500 000 tons over the next three to five years and it is therefore critical that the entire logistics chain is able to support this growth with specialised reefer ships like the MV Cool Eagle playing a critical role. Last year's export season saw a 33% increase in citrus shipments on specialised reefer vessels. With this year's export season kicking off with a visit by the MV Cool Eagle, followed closely by her sister ship MV Cool Spirit, there is a strong demand from exporters to continue to supply citrus to Europe and Russia in reefer vessels for the remainder of the year

With the citrus industry already supporting 120 000 jobs, the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa looks forward to working with all its partners during the upcoming season in order to achieve another record year, and to contribute further towards job creation, transformation and inclusive growth in South Africa.

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**Media Enquiries**

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Photo Caption: Citrus Growers Association and the team from the MV Cool Eagle