



CAPE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

VEHICLE HEIGHT MAY HALT WP CROP EXPORTS IN 2019

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Western Province fruit and citrus farmers may not be able to export their crops next year unless there is a change in the legislation on the maximum height of vehicles.

The problem is that the “high-cube” refrigerated shipping containers are too high by 28 centimetres when they are loaded on a normal trailer and the only way to lower them is to replace the trailers now in use with more expensive and longer low-bed trailers.

This will be a huge expense for an industry that has already been hit hard by the worst drought in more than a century.

A further problem is that all the packing sheds have been built to accommodate the existing trailers. With these trailers, forklifts can drive straight into the containers to load the fruit in a quick and efficient process. This will not be possible with the new trailers as the load-bed rests between the front and rear axels and the forklift will no longer be able to drive straight into the container.

The high-cube container was introduced in 2004 and is now the international standard. The maximum height of a vehicle in South Africa is 4.3 metres, but an exception was granted for double decker buses which are even taller than the high-cube containers on normal trailers. The truckers want a similar exemption.

After many trucks carrying the new containers were heavily fined there was an outcry and the Department of Transport introduced a moratorium for seven years and which expires in January next year.



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The industry understood that during this time there would be investigations to see if the extra height posed a danger to the stability of the truck and trailer. The Department of Transport says the moratorium was to give the industry time to convert to the low-bed trailers and it intends to implement the legislation as the industry had had enough time to acquire new trailers.

As far as we are aware there have been no accidents caused by the extra height of the high-cubes.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber

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