

Friday last week marked a major milestone for South Africa's Port of Durban with the arrival of the world's largest specialized reefer vessel, the Cool Eagle.

The vessel will help meet the capacity demands of South Africa's increasing citrus exports, and its arrival follows concerns in the industry regarding reefer capacity this season amid a global container imbalance due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Citrus Growers' Association of South Africa (CGA) was on hand to welcome the vessel which is a first-time caller at South Africa's ports.

Growers are expected to export a record-breaking 163-million cartons of citrus during the 2021 export season, translating into more job opportunities and foreign exchange revenue and contributing to the national government's goal of increased agricultural exports over the next few years.

A delegation from the CGA will visit the Durban port on Friday morning to meet the master and crew and take a tour of the vessel.

"The MV Cool Eagle is the largest reefer vessel in the world and this will be the first time it will be visiting a South African port," CGA spokesperson Nicole Mirkin was quoted as saying.

"Its arrival is in order to meet the demand of South Africa's increasing citrus exports. 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 the national government's goal of increased agricultural exports over the next few years."