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R100m citrus facility for Coega IDZ

📅 February 24, 2017 👤 Shaun Gillham

Massive cold storage plant underlines confidence in growth of industry

Demonstrating strong confidence in the growth of the regional citrus industry and citrus exports out of the Eastern Cape, leading cold storage operator

Port Elizabeth Cold Storage has sunk R100-million into a new, state-of-the-art facility at the Coega Industrial Development Zone (IDZ).

The company's massive investment will essentially double its current capacity at the Coega site, from where it plays a critical role in the refrigeration and shortterm storage of citrus products before distribution to markets around the world.

PE Cold Storage, which previously occupied the PE Cold Storage facility near the entrance to the Port Elizabeth harbour, was one of the first export-orientated enterprises to relocate to the IDZ.



GOING UP: Port Elizabeth Cold Storage's new facility at Coega is nearing completion

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Upbeat company director Mark Jensen said yesterday the firm was bullish about the growth in the regional citrus industry, its prospects, and the robust growth anticipated in citrus exports.

“The new facility amounts to a further investment of R100-million, which would result in the doubling of the existing capacity of 7 500 pallets of storage to about 15 000 pallets,” he said.

“The expansion complements our modern storage facility and will accommodate greater volumes for the increasing citrus production in the Eastern Cape.

“Our operations involve the pre-cooling of fruit for our customers that export to Europe, Russia, the Middle East, India, UK, Canada and South East Asia, to mention a few.”

Jensen said the PE Cold Storage Warehouse expansion plans had initially been envisaged to take place in the 2020-21 financial year.

But the decision by Fresh Produce Terminals (FPT) to convert its quayside cold storage facilities in the Port Elizabeth harbour to a manganese terminal in the second half of last year, made it necessary for PE Cold Storage to implement its plans earlier.

FPT had handled a significant portion of the volumes stored in Port Elizabeth and, given the inherent growth of PE Cold Storage’s customers and the additional requirements from FPT customers, the industry would not have had enough capacity to cater for this year’s volumes.

Construction of the new facility began near the end of last year and is expected to be completed in time for this year’s citrus season, which starts next month and reaches its peak in June.

The company’s general manager, Craig Vaughn, said: “We employ 50 people at the existing facility, and with the expansion, we foresee accommodating a further 20 staff, which amounts to much-needed jobs and contributes to the overall socioeconomic development of the metro.”

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