



# Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters Newsletter

October –  
November 2024


## Association update

### Meetings

On 9 October, SHAFFE members gathered for a regular meeting of the group in the sidelines of Fruit Attraction, in Madrid, with some participants calling in remotely. Participants were given a summary of the meetings of the various Working Groups (Statistics, Logistics, Sustainability and Market Access) that took place in August and September. They also discussed the contents and format of the planned statistical yearbook, and analysed possibilities for the sale of advertising space in the book. Other items on the agenda included the organization of the planned webinar on sustainability, the Southern Hemisphere Fruit Congress and a public relations event in the sidelines of Fruit Logistica 2025, in Berlin.

#### Save the date!

*All SHAFFE members are warmly invited to our next general assembly meeting, which will take place in the sidelines of Fruit Logistica 2025, in Berlin. More details will follow soon.*



The SHAFFE Secretariat will continue finetuning the organization of these events over the coming months, in collaboration with all members.

### SHAFFE helps shape GlobalGAP's upcoming Environmental Sustainability Solution

Over the past two months, SHAFFE has been actively involved in GlobalGAP's Working Group on the new "Environmental Sustainability Solution" and its various sub-working groups. Our association has been represented by Nitasha Baijnath-Pillay of Hortgro (South Africa), Albert Coetzee of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa, Andrea Pastore of Unión de Productores y Exportadores de Frutas de Uruguay, Ellen Pay, General Secretary of SHAFFE, Belén Rios of Procitrus/Asociación de Gremios Productores Agrarios del Perú, and Tarryn Wettergreen of the South African Table Grape Industry. GlobalGAP is now rewriting its draft standard to take ours, and other stakeholders', comments on board. The revised draft standard will be subjected to a public consultation process in November and December 2024. Our participation in the GlobalGAP meetings and consultation processes provides a unique opportunity to shape GlobalGAP's future new standard on environmental sustainability, and ensures that it takes due account of the challenges and unique circumstances faced by fruit growers in the Southern Hemisphere.

Welcome to the second issue of the Newsletter of the Southern Hemisphere Association of Fresh Fruit Exporters! This Newsletter is a work in progress, and we welcome any suggestions from members that can help us improve this publication. You are all warmly invited to any articles, news items, events etc. you want to share with the SHAFFE members through this Newsletter to the SHAFFE secretariat at [secretariat@shaffe.net](mailto:secretariat@shaffe.net).





## UNCTAD releases 2024 Review of Maritime Transport, highlights need to counter inflationary pressures

On 22 October, United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published its 2024 Review of Maritime Transport report, offering a comprehensive analysis of the current state and future outlook of the global maritime industry. The report examines how geopolitical tensions, climate risks and economic pressures are reshaping maritime transport, while highlighting the critical need for decarbonization and digital innovation. It highlights how geopolitical tensions, such as Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, and climate impacts, like low water levels in the Panama Canal, have caused significant disruptions. These events have forced

vessels to take longer routes around the Cape of Good Hope, increasing fuel consumption, operational costs and carbon emissions. While maritime trade has seen some recovery from the contraction in 2022, the risks related to geopolitical instability and climate change mean that the overall operating environment remains challenging; container trade especially is expected to face further headwinds unless global supply chains stabilize. Furthermore, the higher shipping costs resulting from the rerouting of vessels are passed down to consumers, driving inflation and threatening economic stability, particularly for vulnerable economies. UNCTAD therefore calls for enhanced monitoring of global freight markets to better understand the drivers behind rising costs and to implement targeted policy measures to counter inflationary pressures. The full UNCTAD report is available at <https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2024>.



Source: UNCTAD. 2024 Review of maritime transport. Navigating maritime chokepoints. Geneva. <https://unctad.org/publication/review-maritime-transport-2024>

The call from UNCTAD to increase efficiency in maritime shipping and counter inflationary pressures demonstrates the importance of SHAFFE's ongoing initiative to survey unfair service conditions and additional costs imposed by maritime shipping companies, and draft a series of "charter of good shipping practices" for the industry to ensure fair choice and options on shipping services and avoid unfair and confusing add-on costs. **We are asking all members to provide examples of unfair service conditions and cost additions, and suggest general guidelines or best practices that would prevent such practices.**

Based on your input, we will draw a list of general, clear and simple best practices or guidelines, which the shipping industry will be asked to co-sign. SHAFFE will then be in a position to recommend these entities to its members as co-signatories that they can trust and support and do business with. The online survey can be filled out at

<https://forms.office.com/e/KfT7fKbczZ> (English) or <https://forms.office.com/e/qrNwuy8zU7> (Spanish).

## Dockworkers' strike in ports on US East and Gulf Coasts resolved – for now

On 1 October, the International Longshoremen's Association, the largest North American union for maritime workers, halted work in 36 ports on the East and Gulf Coast of the United States of America. The strike lasted only three days, as a wage deal was reached by dockworkers and port operators that foresees a wage hike of around 62 percent over six years, raising average wages to about USD 63 an hour from USD 39 an hour. However, this tentative deal on wages has ended the strike, but only extends the current contract to 15 January.

The two sides will continue to talk about other issues, such as the ports' use of automation that workers say will lead to job losses. Prior to the strike, SHAFFE contacted the US government to highlight the potential detrimental impacts of the strike, not only on our industry but also on consumers in North America. SHAFFE will continue monitoring the situation and, whenever necessary, urge policymakers to ensure the continuous flow of fresh produce into and from the United States.



## Global Coalition of Fresh Produce, Canadian Produce Marketing Association and International Federation for Produce Standards issue sustainability charter

The Global Coalition of Fresh Produce (of which SHAFFE is an active member) has released, in collaboration with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and the International Federation for Produce Standards, the report of the International Sustainability Summit held this past April in Vancouver, Canada. Together with the report, the organizations also published a Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter, which aims to unite the global fresh produce industry to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience.

The Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter proposes key principles and actions in response to the sector's leading sustainability-related challenges. According to Ron Lemaire, Chairman of the Coalition and President of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, "harmonization is increasingly important to make the fresh produce industry resilient and sustainable in the long term. The International Sustainability Summit report and Sustainability Charter provide a timely set of principles and strategic outcomes to guide the industry

as it navigates the complexities of sustainability monitoring and reporting."

The report of the International Sustainability Summit and the Fresh Produce Sustainability Charter are now available on the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce website at <https://producecoalition.net/news/>.

Source: Global Coalition of Fresh Produce, 19 September 2024

## SHAFFE member Hortgro organizes webinar on soil health

On 16 October, SHAFFE member Hortgro organized the first webinar in its new series about resource management and sustainability, the Hortgro Footprint Webinar Series. This series aims to spotlight sustainable practices, mitigations and risks in the South African deciduous fruit industry. Hosted by Nitasha Baijnath-Pillay, Hortgro's Resource Management and Sustainability Manager, the first webinar focused on the important issue of soil health. A panel of experts, with varied experience and knowledge on this crucial topic, agreed that soil health is a prerequisite for long-term productivity and a fundamental element of sustainable production systems. The recording of the webinar is freely available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck-MPjqoYY8>.

## Fruit South Africa releases Key Fruit Statistics 2022/2023

SHAFFE member Fruit South Africa has released its latest Statistics Booklet, covering the 2022/2023 season. The booklet provides key statistics of the fresh fruit types represented by Fruit South Africa's member associations. Providing a clear snapshot of the South African fresh fruit industry, the booklet has become a go-to resource from which to garner a good understanding of the industry. It reflects growth in total area planted, production, exports, distribution across various market segments, on-farm employment, imports and historical price trends. Exports remain the largest market for the represented South African fresh fruit. The booklet is freely available from Fruit South Africa's website at <https://fruitsa.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/A5-Fruit-SA-Booklet-2022-2023-Digital-Interactive.pdf>.



Source: Fruit South Africa, October 2024.



## Berries ZA casts its net wider in the East

The South African berry industry, which has for so long depended on Europe and the United Kingdom, has been working behind the scenes to gain improved access to the East for some time. While China and India have been on the radar, industry body Berries ZA says it is now also looking at access to Japan. In the October–December period exporters are ramping up volumes as the largest production region in the country, the Western Cape, moves into its peak season. “Our total target for shipments still stands at 23,000 tonnes, after the export crop had previously been adjusted downwards from 25,000 tonnes,” said Berries ZA chief executive Brent Walsh. “We still have good volumes coming out of the north of the country, but volumes are now picking

up significantly as growers in the South increase their harvesting activities.” The market remained short, he noted, so there is very high demand for South African blueberries. “This has resulted in continued pressure on access to airfreight, to service markets as efficiently as possible,” Walsh outlined. “The short market situation is a function of the delay in Peru supply into our markets. There is no clear information yet as to when this situation to change.” The success of the season would very much be determined by what is happening in the Cape region, he continued. Over the longer term, though, success will very much be determined by access to new markets. Berries ZA recently participated in Asia Fruit Logistica as part of the South African delegation.

“In terms of market access, we continue to make progress with our application into the Indian market,” said Walsh. “We are waiting on feedback from India at this stage.” The industry body is awaiting the completion of South Africa’s stonefruit application to gain access to China before the two countries will take on the blueberry access issue. “Once the stonefruit application has been completed into China, we will be in a position to move to the process for our blueberries into China,” he commented. “In the meanwhile, Berries ZA will also be participating in a trade mission to Japan in October to indicate our interest in market access and take the discussion and process further.”

*Source: International Blueberry Organization, Newsletter October 2024.*

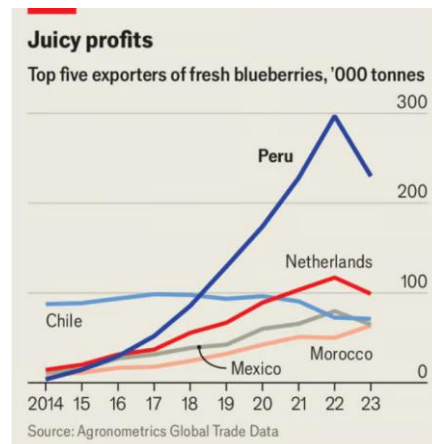
## The sweet story of Peru’s blueberry boom

*Plucky farmers have transformed the market in only ten years*

Peru’s blueberry harvest is just beginning, and Ivan Jauregui, an agronomist, looks excited. At a farm he oversees about 100 km north of Lima, the capital, workers are gently twisting the fruit from their bushes. Staff in a newly built packing-plant load the best berries into refrigerated shipping containers, then pack them off to the port of Callao. Mr Jauregui says he once squeezed 35 tonnes of blueberries from a single hectare of land; he is always hoping to beat this record. “Every year we have to grow and improve,” he says.

Peru caught blueberry fever a little over a decade ago. Farmers noticed that their counterparts in Chile were making a lot of money selling the fruit during the off-season in the United States, when prices are high. They sought to do the same—and things have worked out better than anyone dared hope. Back in 2013, Peruvians earned about \$17m exporting blueberries; by last year receipts had soared to \$1.7bn. In 2019 Peru became the world’s single biggest exporter of

fresh blueberries. Nowadays it sends more than twice as many berries abroad as its closest rivals.



The country owes much of its success to novel kinds of blueberry bush. Historically the fruit has grown well only in places with chilly winters. Peru’s blue revolution relies on newfangled “low chill” varieties, developed in the United States, that thrive on Peru’s coast.

The International Blueberry Organization, an industry group, says that in 2022 the yield of a typical Peruvian blueberry farm was nearly double the global average (which is nine tonnes per hectare). Julio Zavala of Fall Creek, an American breeder of blueberries, reckons it takes only about two years for a new farm in Peru to start turning a profit. In other places four years is more common.

Blueberry farmers have also gained from trends that have boosted all manner of Peruvian produce. These include tax breaks and irrigation megaprojects that have opened up land along Peru’s desert coastline. Between 2000 and 2023, total annual Peruvian farm exports grew 16-fold to \$10.5bn. “It’s mind-bending,” said Rafael Zacnich of Comex, Peru’s international trade association.

Yet blueberries remain “by far” the most profitable crop, reckons Percy Muentef of Agrícola Cerro Prieto, a big agricultural group that employs Mr. Jauregui. If his firm still grows avocados and asparagus, that is in part because it does not want to place all its berries in one basket, he says.



Boosters promise more growth. The world's taste for blueberries is increasing. Peruvian exporters have their eye on China, which produces plenty of its own berries but which could eat a lot more. And there is additional land in Peru that could be used to grow the fruit, if politicians and

investors bless the big infrastructure projects needed to water them. Yet in future growers will also have to swerve a handful of risks. Last year extreme weather stole a big chunk of Peru's production (though its income from exports continued soaring, because global prices shot up). It was not the

only country to suffer, but the sticky experience has accelerated efforts to identify and spread varieties that might cope better with climate change. And farmers in lots of other places fancy a slice of Peru's blueberry pie, notes Mr Jauregui. "Colombia, Morocco: everyone is growing blueberries now."

*Source: The Economist, 12 September 2024.*

## El gobierno argentino intensificó negociaciones con Estados Unidos para abrir exportaciones

Una comitiva del Ministerio de Economía viajó a Washington y se reunió con funcionarios del Departamento de Comercio estadounidense con la mira puesta en los cítricos dulces y en la carne que Argentina busca venderles a los norteamericanos. "Fue muy positiva", describió uno de los integrantes de la comitiva del Ministerio de Economía que participó de las reuniones en Washington con el Departamento de Comercio de Estados Unidos. "Nosotros les contamos todo lo que estamos haciendo y ven con muy buen ojos el proceso. En ese marco, se plantearon temas de apertura de mercado y aumento de cuotas para exportación argentina", narraron. El Gobierno busca acelerar el comienzo de la entrada de los cítricos dulces a Estados Unidos, que todavía espera que concluyan todas las certificaciones sanitarias que habiliten su ingreso y comercialización. El capítulo de los cítricos dulces presenta ribetes de "ventana de oportunidad" y una pintoresca competencia. Uno de los documentos del Ministerio de Economía explica que "la producción (de estos productos) en Estados Unidos se encuentra en declive". En simultáneo, es el cuarto mayor importador del mundo de estos productos. Quedaría quinto si se considerara a la Unión Europea como bloque. Por lo tanto, este dato sostiene la idea de la existencia de un mercado atractivo al que la Argentina quiere llegar. Pero además, en Argentina se registra un fenómeno particular: se produce relativamente mucho y se exporta poco en comparación a otros países de la región. Según cifras oficiales, nuestro país es el cuarto con la mayor producción de cítricos dulces del hemisferio sur. Sólo nos superan Brasil, Indonesia y Sudáfrica. 1,6 millones de toneladas es el volumen de producción argentina. Por debajo de ella, se encuentran Perú, con 1,2 millones de toneladas, Australia con 619,330 toneladas, y Chile con 387,277 toneladas. Aquí surge un aspecto pintoresco de la historia que podría sumar una "rivalidad" con los trasandinos, además de la pica futbolera. Pese a tener un volumen de producción menor, Chile registra ingresos por US\$270 millones por exportaciones. "Casi la totalidad de las exportaciones tienen como destino Estados Unidos", sostiene el documento oficial del Gobierno argentino. En contraste, las exportaciones de cítricos dulces significan para nuestro país unos US\$60,5 millones.

*Fuente: Federcitrus Newsletter - Últimas noticias, 23 de octubre de 2024*

## The Argentinean government has intensified negotiations with the United States to open exports

A delegation from the Ministry of Economy traveled to Washington and met with officials from the US Department of Commerce with their sights set on the sweet citrus fruits and meat that Argentina seeks to sell to the Americans. "It was very positive," described one of the members of the delegation from the Ministry of Economy that participated in the meetings in Washington with the United States Department of Commerce. "We tell them everything we are doing and they view the process very favorably. In this framework, issues of market opening and increasing quotas for Argentine exports were raised," they narrated. The Government seeks to accelerate the beginning of the entry of sweet citrus fruits into the United States, which is still waiting for all the health certifications to be completed that enable their entry and marketing. The chapter on sweet citrus fruits presents hints of a "window of opportunity" and a picturesque competition. One of the documents from the Ministry of Economy explains that "the production (of these products) in the United States is in decline." At the same time, it is the world's fourth largest importer of these products. It would be fifth if the European Union were considered as a bloc. Therefore, this data supports the idea of the existence of an attractive market that Argentina wants to reach. But in addition, in Argentina there is a particular phenomenon: relatively much is produced and little is exported compared to other countries in the region. According to official figures, our country is the fourth largest producer of sweet citrus fruits in the southern hemisphere. Only Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa surpass us. 1.6 million tonnes is the volume of Argentine production. Below it are Peru, with 1,2 million tonnes, Australia with 619,330 tonnes, and Chile with 387,277 tonnes. Here a picturesque aspect of history emerges that could add to a "rivalry" with the trans-Andeans, in addition to the soccer game.

Despite having a smaller production volume, Chile registers income of US\$270 million from exports. "Almost all exports are destined for the United States," maintains the official document of the Argentine Government. In contrast, sweet citrus exports mean about US\$60.5 million for our country.

*Source: Federcitrus Newsletter - Últimas noticias, 23 October 2024 (automatic translation)*