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Department:
Trade, Industry and Competition
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 3298

Inkosi R N Cebekhulu (IFP) to ask the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition:

Considering that the top exportable products of the Republic are largely perishable items which include grapes, maize, apples, apricots, peaches, sugar and soya beans, according to his records, how does load shedding and the unstable supply of electricity affect products awaiting exportation? NO4394E

REPLY:

Information sourced from Export Councils, who are partially supported by the Department, and which represent exporters of fruit, ostrich and abalone indicates that the two most important factors that affect the quality of perishable products destined for export markets are time and temperature control. For products that are scheduled for export at the Container Depots, load shedding and unstable supply of electricity necessitates that alternative power sources are installed in the form of diesel-powered generators for cold chain maintenance and operations which cannot be halted.

With regards to Cold Stores, time becomes a critical factor for temperature control of perishable products. Several contact points in cold stores that are impacted by electricity supply include the container-truck waiting times; all of which have a knock-on effect on the export load schedules as well as booking times at the ports. Final Inspections by the Perishable Produce Export Control Board (PPECB) at the cold stores may result in reefer rejections if the time and temperature control requirements are not complied with, which can lead to either compromised shelf-life or spoilage of the perishable products.

Between April 2021 and September 2023, R323 million was approved to support more than 50 projects in the agriculture and agro-processing industries. During the same period R260 million was disbursed to just over 45 projects in the agriculture and agro-processing industries.

Products include the following:

- Fruits such as blue berries, citrus, dried mango and tropical fruits;
- Meat products such as processed meat, pork carcasses;
- Dairy products;
- Alcohol such as wine and gin;
- Vegetable oils; and
- Snacks such as sugar-based confectionaries, condiments, popcorn, and cookies.

Given the above, we welcome and support the measures to address electricity supply and stability.

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