

## Enhanced Tracking for Fresh Produce Terminals

The Fresh Produce Terminal (FPT) operates three fruit exporting terminals around South Africa - in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban - and one in Maputo, Mozambique. FPT offers fruit exporters customized cooling and shipping services through these four fruit terminals in Southern Africa. During the deciduous, citrus and exotic fruit seasons, more than one million pallets of fruit are cooled and shipped to over 60 countries around the world.

### The Challenge

With an aging wireless infrastructure based on narrowband radio protocols which was unable to guarantee complete coverage of the site and handheld computing devices which were unable to scan inside a cold room and furthermore could not be reliably repaired due to spare parts being unobtainable, it was clear that FPT needed a comprehensive upgrade of their mobility solution.

### The Solution

FPT invested R5 million in a solution which will manage the tracking of pallets of fresh export fruit into the warehouse and from there onto shipping vessels, via the implementation of 250 vehicle-mounted and over 100 mobile computers from Symbol Technologies.

Andre Uys, group manager: information systems and technology at FPT, explains, "After months of several companies bidding for the contract, we chose Symbol. This was because none of the other bidders could beat the total package that Symbol offered. They just could not match the price, product, technology and service. We see this as a long-term commitment and are pleased with our decision. The wrong choice would have been catastrophic for our business."



FPT use Symbol and in its warehouse pallet-tracking environment.

The VRC 6940 Vehicle Radio Computer Series combines with a tethered scanner. The vehicle-mounted terminals can withstand extreme temperatures and harsh industrial environments. The VRC 6940 is mounted directly to forklift trucks, enabling operators to wirelessly collect and transmit data to the host from the warehouse floor. These truck-mounted computers facilitate real-time management of material; work in process and finished goods. Productivity increases because operators receive the latest work instructions and information updates without leaving the forklift.

There are a number of variables with regard to the pallets; for example, a client may specify a certain quantity of a particular type and grade of fruit from a specific farm, region, or exporter, among a host of other parameters. These pallets are loaded and then have to be discharged at any number of terminals overseas.

FPT have to be able to locate a pallet that meets those specifications and ensure it arrives at its final destination with the minimum of hassle. Without a system in place that allows FPT to know exactly where each individual pallet is, it would be impossible to go through a store of in excess of 15 000 pallets to find a specific one.

### The Benefits

The system allows FPT to accurately manage the tracking of pallets of fresh export fruit into the warehouse and from there onto shipping vessels. The Symbol system also enables FPT to scan in the cold rooms. FPT have also invested in a 5-year service level agreement, which ensures fixed costs on maintenance, a faster turnaround time and general peace of mind with regard to the maintenance of the Symbol equipment.