

## ReeFer MadNeSS

Prepare yourselves, shipping costs are high. Last August the national rate for refrigerated (“reefer”) trucks began to, once again, creep higher and higher. There have been a number of reasons over the years for the acclivity. Fuel prices, inclement weather, driver scarcity, as well as increased regulations.



2017 ended with a tough blow and reefer madness is in full swing. According to the DAT Freight Index, (the largest truckload freight marketplace in North America), December was the highest monthly average for refrigerated trucks ever recorded in DAT trend lines. According to the release, in December 2017 the national average reefer rate was \$2.46 per mile. That is 47¢ higher than the previous December (2016). So, what is different?

On December 18th, 2017 the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) mandate was put into effect. The ELD rule is a part of the congressionally mandated Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) that was signed into law in 2012. The intention of MAP-21 is to bring the U.S. transportation system into the 21st century. This includes improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery. The specific intention of the ELD rule to help create a safer work environment for drivers, and make it easier and faster to accurately track, manage, and share Records Of Duty Status (RODS) data. An ELD synchronizes with a vehicle engine to automatically record driving time, for easier, more accurate hours of service (HOS) recording. These changes have made many drivers consider a new line of work. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), however, says the rule will save the industry \$1 billion a year, in time and money saved on paperwork. In a press release the agency also said the rule will “save 26 lives and 562 injuries” a year.

It is unclear if this newly enforced mandate is the reason for the massive increase in price; but- it is happening.



Weight of 3 gal container = 484 gm (1+ lb)

Weight of Netting\* = 13 gm

\*Netting needed for a 3 gallon plant

Perhaps this development, in conjunction with passed frustrations, have brought us here. The influx, with any luck, is a simple supply and demand problem. Truck fleets will soon be updated and ELD will be standard. The hope is the more trucks equipped with ELD, the more drivers willing to drive, the happier we will all be... eventually.

This too shall pass. In the meantime, our exclusive line of Grow Ready Liners™ will keep your shipping costs as low as possible. Without the added weight of a container we can ship more trees per load. We will also continue working together, scouring the market, to find the best possible shipping rates. Take comfort in knowing that amidst the madness, the trees you receive are some of the highest quality at the best value available. Thank you for choosing Robinson Nursery.