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SA and Italy seek closer agri trade ties

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Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen and Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests Francesco Lollobrigida. Source: SA Government News

South Africa and Italy are seeking closer cooperation across agricultural supply chains, with trade, investment, agro-processing, packaging, technology and logistics among the key themes discussed at the inaugural South Africa-Italy Agribusiness Forum.

The two-day forum, which began on June 9, brought together government and industry representatives from both countries to identify opportunities for collaboration and expand market access for agricultural products.

Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen said discussions were focused on building integrated value chains that connected production, processing, packaging, logistics and retail.

"The real opportunity lies not only in exporting more agricultural products but in combining South Africa's production strengths with Italy's expertise in processing, technology and branding to create greater value across the entire supply chain."

Steenhuisen highlighted citrus, table grapes, wine and avocados among South Africa's major agricultural exports, while identifying opportunities for collaboration in sectors including citrus, wine, horticulture and macadamias.

The signing of a memorandum of understanding aimed at strengthening agricultural cooperation between the two countries and establishing a joint working group to develop projects flowing from the discussions is expected to follow the forum.

In a separate development, South Africa and Italy concluded negotiations on a work plan governing the export of Italian table grapes to South Africa. The agreement formalises phytosanitary and market access requirements for the product.

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