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Stargrow records its first Tango exports

Stargrow Marketing's first exports of Tango bring impetus to new mandarin exports from South Africa

South African exporter Stargrow Marketing has recorded its first exports of the branded mandarin, Tango, and has said that it is excited about the potential of the variety in all the major marketing regions.

Tango, for which plant breeders' rights were granted in South Africa last year, were exported for the first time in 2016 and this year also made its appearance on supermarket shelves of the Shoprite Checkers Group, a leading supermarket in South Africa.

It is reported to have been planted widely across South Africa and a number of exporters have licences to export the variety.

"Stargrow has producers in six South African regions who deliver Tango to us between week 25 and week 34. We delivered our first exports to customers in the UK, the European Union, South East Asia, the Middle East, Russia, Africa and the United States," said Hennie Prins, managing director of Stargrow Marketing.

Although the EU at this stage still form a big part of our marketing strategy, we have already started working with customers in Asia, South East Asia and the Far East where we see excellent potential in China," Prins continued. "The potential to develop high return markets is very good and in China the demand for seedless mandarins is enormous and growing year-on-year."

He said Stargrow Marketing participated in this year's retail promotion with the Shoprite Checkers Group. "It was a major success in the efforts to introduce this exciting variety to South African consumers," he explained.

"With more young orchards coming into bearing and older orchards increasing production we believe that the volume available to us will dramatically increase in the years ahead," Prins outlined. "We understand the importance of working with producers to supply technical support in order to maximise production and pack-outs. We do this and some of our growers harvested 20 hectares of fruit in only the third year of production."

He said that in establishing the variety and achieving the best result for growers, packhouses have to be flexible to pack different specifications.

Earlier, the Tango brand owner Eurosemillas SA said it was satisfied with the progress made so far in South Africa.

"The 'Tango Fruit' project is based on licensed growers of Tango variety having to comply with quality standards and certification processes, as well as to sign an Agreement of Use of Trademark with Eurosemillas SA so as to be able to sell under the Tango Fruit trademark to the retailer," explained Stéphanie Paoloni of Eurosemillas SA.