Zimbabwe's horticultural sector is seeing recovery due to investment

Zimbabwe's horticultural sector, severely affected by violent land seizures two decades ago, is experiencing a recovery driven by increased investment. The industry is aiming to achieve $1 billion in exports by 2030, according to the Horticultural Development Council (HDC).

In 1999, Zimbabwe's horticultural exports reached $140 million, but the sector faced challenges following the land seizures championed by former President Robert Mugabe. Presently, the country earns $120 million annually from horticultural exports, including citrus, flowers, tea, avocados, blueberries, and macadamia nuts.

The HDC Vice President, Linda Nielsen, stated at a horticultural conference in Harare that reaching the $1 billion export goal would require significant sector expansion, calling for $1.2 billion in investment. The sector faces challenges such as an inconsistent policy and regulatory environment, high borrowing costs, logistics issues, and ongoing concerns about land tenure.

Investment in high-demand products like blueberries and macadamia nuts, coupled with technical support and funding from the European Union (a major market for Zimbabwe's horticultural exports), is contributing to the sector's resurgence. Traditional products like citrus, tea, and flowers are also benefiting from this renewed focus, with plans for the revival of up to 10,000 hectares of citrus plantations by 2030. The Citrus Growers Association President, Pete Breinstein, highlighted the potential for growth, especially in citrus, which had faced losses due to previous land reforms.

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