

South Africa's agricultural sector expands international markets

In a recent parliamentary address, Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen highlighted the opening of several international export markets during the end of the 6th administration. This development is particularly relevant to South Africa, where the agriculture sector is heavily export-oriented. The introduction of new markets is timely, considering the sector's ongoing reforms, the rise of market-ready emerging farmers, and the adoption of advanced farming practices and technologies that have improved yields and productivity in various industries.

Avocado exports to China and Japan

Key markets that South Africa secured agreements with in the final months of the previous administration are vital for maintaining the positive trajectory of the country's agricultural export earnings. These markets are instrumental in preserving employment within the agricultural sector, contributing to the gross domestic product, and building upon traditional markets. Notably, South Africa has initiated avocado exports to China and Japan, with expectations of an increase in exports following the signing of protocols with both nations. The Chinese market, which saw avocado imports rise to 60 000 tons by 2023, and the Japanese market, with annual imports surpassing those of China, present significant opportunities despite competition from countries like Peru.

Citrus to Vietnam

Furthermore, a new bilateral protocol signed with Vietnam in March 2024 ahead of the citrus export season marks a significant step for South Africa, given the growing importance of Asia and the Middle East as export destinations. Vietnam's orange imports have seen a substantial increase, demonstrating the potential for South African citrus products in this market. However, the success in these new markets will largely depend on the efficiency of South Africa's supporting infrastructure, such as ports, railways, and roadways, and the management of biosecurity risks. These factors will be crucial for the new agricultural minister to address in order to capitalize on these opportunities.

Source: iol.co.za (<https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/key-markets-likely-to-boost-sas-trade-in-2024-3440ba6d-9eaa-4e12-be2a-b780527706f9>)

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