

South Africa

South Africa targets China as key market for its farm produce

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By Stephen Engle and Mike Cohen, Bloomberg 4 Sep 2024 12:30



Image: Waldo Swiegers / Bloomberg

South Africa new 10-party coalition government aims to increase agricultural exports to China, part of a drive to forge closer ties with the Asian nation, fire up its economy and tackle a 34% unemployment rate.

“We are focusing on making sure that we build strong relationships with China and that at a technical level, our agricultural products are able to meet the phytosanitary and biosecurity requirements of China,” Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen, who is part of a South African delegation attending the ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing, said in interview with Bloomberg Television on Wednesday.

South Africa already supplies large quantities of citrus and beef to China, and is looking expand the basket of goods it sells, he said.

China last year overtook the European Union as South Africa's largest trading partner, with two-way flows totaling \$55.2 billion and the balance in Pretoria's favor. The two nations are both members of the Brics bloc of developing nations that also includes Brazil, Russia and India, and the grouping seeks to challenge Western dominance of the global economy.

"We look forward to using this relationship in a strategic way to benefit South Africa," Steenhuisen said. "I think that we are getting a lot more out of the relationship than losing."

Steenhuisen leads the centrist Democratic Alliance, South Africa's second-biggest political party, and joined President Cyril Ramaphosa's so-called government of national unity after May 29 elections failed to produce an outright winner.

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