

Botswana's inaugural citrus harvest targets international markets

Botswana is gearing up for its first citrus harvest from the Selibe-Phikwe Citrus Project, signaling a significant move towards enhancing its agricultural output. The project, situated approximately 402 km east of Gaborone, is preparing to distribute its inaugural harvest, with lemons leading the charge, followed by oranges, grapefruit, and naartjies in future seasons.

Johan Janse van Vuuren, the project's operations manager, highlighted the initiative's readiness to commence exports, aiming to allocate 70% of the produce to international markets, including China, the United States, Canada, Britain, the Middle East, and Japan. The venture occupies 889 hectares, with expectations to achieve optimal production of 700,000 tonnes annually by the 2026/2027 season. Fidelis Molao, Botswana's Minister of Agriculture, emphasized the project's potential to become a leading citrus development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, noting the local market's capacity to foster spin-off businesses and reduce reliance on imported goods.

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