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MoU with Mozambique bulks up citrus muscle down south

10 Jun 2024 - by Staff reporter



A citrus orchard in Massinger, Mozambique. Source: Actualidade 365

Burgeoning citrus farmers in Mozambique have received a boost through signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with one of the most reputable sector-specific representative bodies in the industry, the Citrus Growers Association (CGA) of Southern Africa.

The agreement will enable the Mozambique Citrus Association (MCA), a broad-based stakeholder group and co-signatory of the MoU, to “have access to a wealth of expertise and support”, CGA chief executive Justin Chadwick has said.

The resource-rich potential that the CGA holds for the MCA was also confirmed by Tertius Strauss, a citrus farmer operating in the Massingir area, some 336 kilometres north of Maputo near Mozambique’s border with the Kruger National Park.

According to Strauss, who is the general manager of the agri-logistics outfit Verdant Produce Mozambique, the MoU will underpin the establishment of an enduring citrus industry in Mozambique.

Speaking of Mozambique's fledgling citrus sector, he said: "At present, it is very small, about 350 hectares, but it has so much potential.

"Joining the CGA is one of the ways we are getting citrus in Mozambique up and running and onto the global stage."

Chadwick added that the CGA and its group of companies would empower the MCA in several ways.

"These include receiving technical assistance from Citrus Research International, advanced training by the Citrus Academy, and increased access to international markets through established CGA channels."

Strauss said although citrus farming in Mozambique was in its infancy, with the growing of lemons, valencias and grapefruit in Massingir and Maputo making up Mozambique's current output capacity, a long-term view was required to grow the sector.

"It is not about the number of growers, but about the future possibilities.

"The orchards at Massingir are only three years old. They employ 150 people at the moment, but when the project is completed they will provide over 800 jobs."

Chadwick said it was clear that the MCA was motivated to establish a flourishing Mozambican citrus sector by leveraging its unique advantages, which include the nearby Port of Maputo, sub-Saharan Africa's most efficient port according to the World Bank's most recent Container Port Performance Index.

He enthused that "the CGA already represents over 1 560 growers from South Africa, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

"It is a great pleasure to welcome our Mozambique neighbours as well. We are now a truly united southern African industry association.

"The world appreciates the quality of citrus from our region. This represents immense opportunities for everyone in southern Africa. By working together, growers across borders can achieve greater efficiency, competitiveness, and profitability."

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