

Promise of opportunity for South African agriculture

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 16 July 2024

The first budget speech from South Africa's new minister of agriculture John Steenhuisen sets a positive tone

Settling the South African citrus dispute with the European Union and maintaining South Africa's part in the US AGOA Act are amongst the priorities for South Africa's new minister of agriculture, John Steenhuisen.

Steenhuisen introduced his department's budget debate in parliament, in Cape Town this morning (16 July).

"This, along with greater market access, will help us to open new opportunities for the sector," he said.

Steenhuisen recorded that the first South African avocado exports were either on the way or had been delivered to India, China and Japan.

"Other of our export sectors also had breakthroughs in new markets, such as South African citrus and table grapes in Vietnam."

But he said that there were also other opportunities in terms of market access that could be pursued, noting that the country must ensure that its systems were in place to be able to do so.

The country has been involved in a long dispute with the EU regarding citrus exports and recent reports from the US suggested that South Africa's benefits in the AGOA could be reviewed in future.



John Steenhuisen

Image: Democratic Alliance, Wikimedia Commons

EUROFRUIT The EU is South Africa's biggest citrus market and over the past 20 years growers in the western parts of the country have developed a significant market in the US.

Other categories, such as stonefruit and table grapes, and for that matter avocados, are also looking towards building their business under AGOA.

Steenhuisen also referred to South Africa's export logistics and said ports, rail and roads needs to be in a good state to boost the export drive.

The new minister has to hit the ground running after the recent formation of a government of national unity.

Last week the country's president Cyril Ramaphosa hosted his first Lekgotwa – the common name for a strategic brainstorm of all Cabinet members and Premiers of the Provinces.

Observers said that he clearly reflected the outcome of this strategic meeting in his first address to parliament.

Steenhuisen said that there would not be any changes to the strategic development plan for agriculture, but that he would ensure that the implementation is accelerated.

The government would do everything to ensure security in the agriculture sector, for both farmers and workers, he added.

