

## SA's peach export 'growing 15% per year'

The UK is still the principal market for South African peaches, absorbing more than 50% of total exports, according to last month's figures by TradeProbe, a regular report by the National Agricultural Marketing Council.

The figures show that SA has remained a net exporter of peaches between 2001 and last year, indicating that the industry was one of a few in the country that remained resilient and sustainable, keeping an above-average trade balance in SA's favour, said Sifiso Ntombela, the council's senior economist.

The agricultural sector contributed 3% to SA's gross domestic product in 2010, a figure comparable to the rest of the Brics member countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China.

In SA, peaches are planted largely in the Western Cape.

The report said between 2001 and last year, the value of SA's peach exports increased from the low base of R51m in 2001 to R59m in 2005, and reached R181m last year.

"The largest growth in export value was observed in the past four years," said Ntombela.

SA's peach exports grew by an average rate of 15% per year in the past decade.

Over the past five years, SA produced an average of nearly 60000 tons of peaches a year.

The value of peach imports coming into the South African market in the past 11 years has remained insignificant, with small amounts originating from Israel and Egypt.

The main exported variety is Transvalia, followed by San Pedro, Novadonna, Brittney Lane, and Earligrande. These top five types account for 68% of the country's total exports, the report said.

After the UK, other major markets for SA's peach exports are the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates and Mauritius.

Asanda Languza, senior agricultural economist at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's international trade directorate, is quoted in the council's report as saying that while SA had a very small share of world hazelnut exports, this sector could be developed. Languza said the leading markets for hazelnuts exported by SA in 2010 were Mauritius, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, accounting for a 75%, 10% and 5%, respectively.

In Mauritius, SA's competitors for hazelnuts were France, Turkey and Germany. Turkey is the world's biggest global

exporter of hazelnuts, responsible for 77% of world exports, followed by Italy with a share of only 7.7% and Georgia at 4.3%. These top three exporters account for 89% of the value of world exports.

Languza argued that SA could provide an alternative high-value crop, particularly if production problems were experienced in Turkey, a development that could have major ramifications for world supply since the country supplied 77% of the world demand.

Source: *Business Day*

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