



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Media Statement

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MINISTER SENZENI ZOKWANA'S VISIT TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) of the Republic of South Africa led a delegation to the Kingdom of Thailand, Bangkok from the 27th – 28th November 2018. Thailand is one of the strategic countries in Asia that imports fresh produce from South Africa (SA) and after many years of consistent hard work by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) together with the industry, SA table grapes were granted market access into Thai market in 2016.

Prior to the Ministerial meeting scheduled for the 27th November 2018, Minister paid a courtesy visit to Rubber Smoked Sheet production and an aquaculture facility at Boonthong Cooperative (Chonburi Province). Natural rubber industry is one of the most important industries in Thailand. Its revenue is about 82,000 million Baht a year. Ninety percent of all rubber produced in Thailand is exported, and about 60-70 percent of the rubber exported is in the form of ribbed smoked sheets.

Following this visit Minister met his counterpart from Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives on the 28th November 2018 where the two parties took note of the following development and the outcome of the SPS technical meeting on Agriculture between South Africa and Thailand.

➤ **Market access for South African Apples and Pears**

Following the conclusion of market access for SA table grapes, the SA Industry's next priority commodities are apples and pears. DAFF shared the view that apple and pear Pest Risk Analysis could be conducted concurrently based on the fact that the pest profile, production season, production area in South Africa are the same. However an agreement was reached to prioritize the conclusion for market access for apples which will then be followed by pears. The pest information packages (PIPs) have been provided to the phytosanitary authorities of Thailand. The Thais commit to respond to SA's request by September 2019 the latest.

➤ **Market access for Thailand Mangosteens and Longans:**

The Department of Agriculture of Thailand (DOA) had previously requested market access for the export of fresh Mangosteen fruit to SA and also provided their PIP; subsequent to that, they proposed risk management measures for the quarantine pests of concern to SA. DAFF also provided a revised draft phytosanitary work plan for the DOA's consideration and inputs. Currently, the feedback is still pending from DOA.

The following are some of **South African market access request** for products beef, processed beef, pork, ostrich meat and ostrich products are some of the commodities that are under discussion:

➤ **The Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Agricultural Cooperation between the Republic of SA and the Kingdom of Thailand.**

In order to solidify the much anticipated draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Agricultural Cooperation between the Republic of SA and the Kingdom of Thailand, the MoU was finally signed on the 28th November 2018 by Minister Zokwana with his counterpart from the Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

South Africa and Thailand trade on a most favoured nation (MFN) basis. During the year 2017 Thailand ranked 4th on a list of countries that export agriculture, forestry and fisheries (AFF) products to South Africa (SA) with a percentage share of 4.90%. Alternatively Thailand ranked 29th on a list of countries that import agriculture, forestry and fisheries products from South Africa with a percentage share of 0.75%. the signed MoU will be used to address tis trade deficit / imbalance between the two countries.

➤ **Establishment of the First Meeting of South Africa – Thailand Joint Agricultural Working Group under MOU on Agricultural Cooperation**

Both sides agreed to exchange the list of members of the Joint Agricultural Working Group (JAWG) after signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of South Africa on Agricultural Cooperation.

Beside this platform serving as a formal mechanism for the implementation of the signed MoU, JAWG from SA side will be used to discuss trade statistics which is currently in favour of Thailand.

Minister thanked the Thais for their hospitality and the arrangement made in ensuring the successful hosting of this historic event. He also mentioned that cooperation between

Thailand and South Africa would be more strengthened after signing the MOU on Agriculture Cooperation. He believed that all agreed issues during the meeting would be translated into concrete action and hoped the counterparts of both side would closely coordinate with each other in order to expedite further implementation.

In conclusion the two parties mandated the officials to speed up the process of finalizing market accesses between the two countries. Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives thanked South Africa for volunteering to host the first SA – Thailand Agriculture Joint Working Group meeting in 2019.

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