

Compcom approves Witzenberg acquisition of Crookes Brothers fruit operations

During its meeting on 29 August, the Competition Commission approved the proposed transaction whereby Witzenberg Properties intends to acquire the deciduous fruit operations of Crookes Brothers South Africa, with conditions.



Competition Commission approves the Crookes Brothers fruit operations sale. Source: Crookes Brothers

Witzenberg is owned by the Pieter Graaff Family Trust and controls several firms, including Ceres Potatoes and Ceres Fruit Growers. Through Witzenberg, the Acquiring Group is an agricultural business and producer of pome fruit (pears and apples) and is also active in packaging, juice processing, and marketing of pome fruit for the South African and export markets.

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The primary target firm is the deciduous fruit (pome fruit) operations of Crookes Brothers, which is active in selling into fruit packing, logistics, marketing and sales; and the processing of fruit not suitable for packing and marketing into concentrates (juice).

These operations include produce from several farms located in the EGV (Elgin, Grabouw, Villiersdorp) region of the Western Cape.

Will not lessen competition

The Commission found that the proposed transaction is unlikely to result in substantial prevention or lessening of competition in any relevant markets. The merging parties have agreed to a set of public interest conditions, including ensuring that a certain amount of their procurement will be committed to historically disadvantaged persons-owned firms.

Further, Witzenberg will ensure that the farmworkers continue to participate in the Ithemba Elitsha Structure. This acquisition will combine the expertise and resources of both companies to provide better solutions for the agricultural industry. The specific conditions of the acquisition have not been disclosed.

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