

SA exports first air shipment of litchis to US

PRETORIA: The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has announced that South Africa has earlier this month exported its first air shipment of litchis to the United States. "The department views this achievement as one of the major contributions on the country's initiative of expanding export markets, positioning South Africa as one of the significant exporters in the world.



B.navez via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

"This achievement will enhance socio-economic growth as stipulated in, among others, the National Development Plan and the Strategic Plan of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries," the department said in a statement on Tuesday.

The department said the shipment was the result of a partnership with the relevant government departments and the litchi industry who negotiated for market access with the US and ensured South Africa was able to meet the US import requirements and regulations.

The fruit was packed at Riverside in Mpumalanga and landed in Atlanta, irradiated at Gateway in the US and then transhipped to the relevant agents in US. "The feedback received was most encouraging and sales are reported to be going well, with the first commercial orders now being placed," the department said.

An industry set to grow

In 2014, the litchi industry recorded a contribution of approximately 2,390 jobs, both direct and indirect and about R120 million to the gross value income. The department said the litchi industry had the potential to grow supported by the continuous production of healthy and safe fruit that will continue to position South Africa as a key player in the export market.

Compliance with phytosanitary market access requirements and other related measures is key to sustaining this export market.

Chairperson of the South African Litchi Growers' Association (SALGA) Market Access Committee Don Westcott said the litchi industry was hoping to have more commercial consignments being airfreighted out to the USA this season. "We welcome the continued support from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and our government in particular. This was really a great collective effort and a special success story for our industry," said Westcott

The department expressed appreciation to farm workers, growers, leadership of relevant associations, transportation, agents and plant inspectors to packhouses, as well as the Perishable Products Export Control Board and other relevant departments for making the shipment possible.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>