

# Apple Export Protocol gets access to China

The South African Apple and Pear Producers' Association (SAAPPA) has announced that the Apple Export Protocol enabling apple exports to China has been approved.



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The protocol was signed by Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana and Minister AQSIQ Zhi Shuping during the current state visit to the People's Republic of China in Beijing on 4 December. This culminates an eight-year process between the two countries and will enable the local apple industry to expand its marketing footprint.

Tapping into this market has been a major priority in the industry for more than a decade and should act as a springboard to also more effectively access other markets in Asia. Apples are currently exported to eight primary destinations, including: Africa, the Far East and Asia, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, Continental Europe (including Russia) and smaller volumes to the Indian Ocean Islands, the USA and Canada. By adding China to the destination list, the fruit industry will continue to create more job opportunities in the primary and secondary agriculture. Further market access will also support further growth and economic development which in turn will enhance land reform transformation and new plantings in the industry.

## The fruit exporting industry could prove compliance with international best practice

A similar process to also open this market for South African pears has already started after which various other fruits, including stone fruit, will follow. It is trusted that the process to formalise further protocols will be fast tracked given that the fruit exporting industry could prove compliance with international best practice in terms of food safety and phyto-sanitary requirements.

In his reaction to the signing of the protocol, Nicholas Dicey, Chairman of SAAPPA, expressed his sincere appreciation and thanks to the Ministry and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), particularly the Plant Health and Plant Inspection divisions of the Department and South African Embassy personnel in Beijing, for their endeavours to work

hard and finalise the protocol with their counterparts in China. He also thanked industry technical specialists for their critical role in supporting the government officials with technical and scientific data over an extended period of time. "This was a real team effort and augers well for future cooperation between industry and government," he concluded.

Anton Rabe, Executive Director of HORTGRO, confirmed that the industry has been proactive in preparing for the possible exports of apples as from the 2015 season. After the very successful verification visit of Chinese quarantine (AQSIQ) officials earlier in 2014, the industry has prepared the required orchard and export registration lists which could be provided to AQSIQ as soon as it is requested. Once the Chinese quarantine officials have approved and signed off on this list, exports could commence immediately.

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