



Tanzania eyes China's \$105 Million avocado market

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TANZANIA: -

Avocados are poised to become green gold in Tanzania, with credit given to horticulture industry champions in collaboration with the government for unlocking the multi-million-dollar Chinese market for local growers.

Data from China Customs indicates that Beijing imports an average of 32,100 tonnes of avocados valued at \$105 million per annum, presenting a huge potential market for local growers, The Citizen reports.

Tanzania Horticultural Association (Taha) chief executive Jacqueline Mkindi says while avocados from Tanzania have mainly been exported to the European markets, the demand in Asia, specifically China, has grown tremendously in the last few years.

However, given the stringent phytosanitary issues that restrict imports of local avocados into China, producers have never been able to access this lucrative market, thanks to lack of bilateral arrangements between the two countries.

The process requires the government to declare existing quarantine pests for assessment by Chinese authorities before they open up the market for local avocados.

The same information should also be presented to AQSIQ, the relevant authority in China where the Beijing market access applications are processed.

But, the good news is that Taha is working overtime in collaboration with the government to fulfill the conditions for local avocados to be granted access to the Chinese market.

"Taha in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture, through Plant Health Services (PHS) have initiated the formal process to enable our Tanzanian exporters to access the Chinese market and some of them have already started communication with potential buyers," Ms Mkindi notes.

The avocado industry is among the fastest growing sub sectors in the horticultural industry, with a huge potential in overseas markets.

Mr George Akida, export manager of Kilimanjaro-based Africado Company, says the demand for Tanzanian avocados in the international market is skyrocketing, with attractive prices, hence positioning Tanzania strategically to conquer a lion's market share if that sector is properly supported and explored.

"China is a potential market for our product, but we have never been able to access the lucrative market because of lack of a bilateral agreement to allow us to do so," Mr Akida says.

He explains that in 2018 the company exported 3,000 tonnes of avocados to the EU, but this year the volume would decline to 2,200, as the market is overcrowded, thanks to an increase in avocado production in Latin America.

In Tanzania, avocado annual production stands at around 7,000 tonnes, chipped in Taha's chief development manager, Mr Anthony Chamanga, adding that commercial production of avocados is dominated by two export companies namely Africado Limited, based in Sanya Juu, Siha District, Kilimanjaro Region, and Rungwe Avocados,

based in Rungwe, Mbeya Region.

Both companies produce more than 5,000 tonnes per year, but are working with the thousands of outgrowers who are producing and supplying nearly 2,000 tonnes.