

Barlinka table grapes approved for export from South Africa to Japan



South Africa is a major exporter of table grapes in the world market. However, until May 2010, table grapes from South Africa were not permitted entry into Japan.

This was consistent with the domestic policy of Japan that prohibits the import of plant material from new sources until a pest risk analysis (PRA) has been completed.

The required PRA was completed in May 2006. That was when a technical specialist from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) visited South Africa to observe the verification test for an in-transit cold treatment that must be applied to the grapes to prevent the entry of foreign fruit flies into Japan.

Subsequently, Japan completed its administrative and legislative requirements in this regard and South Africa recently received official approval to export fresh fruit of the variety Barlinka to Japan, provided that the import phytosanitary requirements agreed upon by the two countries are met.

This is a significant achievement for the South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) and the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)

in their efforts to access new markets and grow the economy.

It has taken many years of bilateral negotiations channelled through the DAFF in collaboration with the industry forum as well as a lengthy series of costly research trials to achieve this.

The main pest of concern to Japan is the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitidis capitata*). To prevent the entry and establishment of this pest in Japan, fruits must be subjected to a cold treatment at or below 0,8°C for 16 consecutive days.

In addition, 2% of cartons of fruit per lot will be inspected by the DAFF's Directorate: Agricultural Products Inspection Services (D: APIS) because the fresh fruits must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate, issued by D: APIS, assuring MAFF Japan that the fresh fruits are free from quarantine pests of concern, including Mediterranean fruit fly, and that they have been cold-treated under the specified conditions.

Before exporting Barlinka grapes to Japan, it is important for producers, packers, exporters and all other role players to understand the phytosanitary import requirements stipulated by Japan in order to ensure that they are able to meet the

requirements fully.

Prospective exporters must, therefore, apply for phytosanitary registration and approval before they can export for the first time in the 2010/11 production season. The registration documents will be supplied to the industry very soon and will also be made available on the departmental website (www.daff.gov.za).

Following this breakthrough, it is hoped that approval from Japan will soon be forthcoming for exporting other table grape varieties for which South Africa is well known.

For more information regarding the export of Barlinka table grapes from South Africa to Japan and the application of phytosanitary requirements, please contact us.

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