



## agriculture, land reform & rural development

Department:  
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### CHIEF DIRECTORATE: COMMUNICATIONS

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## MEDIA STATEMENT

13 November 2023

### **Government clarifies incorrect media reporting about the AgriBEE requirements for agricultural exports to the European and UK markets**

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development recently published two gazettes outlining the procedure for exports from SACU and Mozambique to the EU and the UK, respectively, to take advantage of preferential Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) for certain agricultural and agro-processed products.

The weekend newspapers misrepresented the government's message about the procedure and annual application for export permits to the European Union (EU) and United Kingdom (UK) markets.

In June 2016, South Africa and other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) signed the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. After BREXIT, South Africa then signed an additional EPA with the UK. Both agreements provided preferential and duty-free access to the EU and UK for agriculture and agro-processed products. About 96.2% of South Africa's exported agricultural products are duty-free while 2.5% enjoy partially free access to the EU and UK. Those that are partially duty-free like wine, juice, dairy, and sugar are offered Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ), said Didiza

The department publishes the procedural requirements on an annual basis for the permitting system. Amongst the requirements, an applicant must comply with any sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, rules of origin and an number of other factors contained in the bilateral agreements.

The allocation of these quota take into account the market share of the applicants, the quota applied for, the total available quota, the number of applicants and the BBBEE status of the applicant. These requirements are not new and mirror the previous years' requirements.

To contextualise these requirements few important factors must be outlined:

1. These requirements are not new, and there is no threshold or level that an applicant must reach to be awarded a permit – The BBBEE status of the applicant is but one factor that must be considered in conjunction with all other factors; Under the AgriBEE Sector Code, entities with a turnover of less than R10 million are Exempted Micro Enterprises and are deemed level 4. They merely need an affidavit to this effect and not a verified certificate;

2. The scope of the notices and Gazettes do not apply to all exports but merely to those products contained in Table 1 (part of the notices in the Gazettes – this excludes fresh fruit but still applies to several of our key exports) exported to the EU or UK under the preferential Tariff Rate Quota; The impact and effectiveness of these vital trade agreements are currently being reviewed with an eye to extending and improving upon them.

“Given the sensitive nature of the discussions, we appeal to political parties to refrain from making incorrect comments as these may harm the sector’s prospects as these agreements are reviewed.”

We therefore urge all stakeholders to seek correct and factual information from the department before making any comments.

The department is committed and will continue to ensure all farmers enjoy access to EU and UK markets, said Didiza.

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Issued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development

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