

## Kenya named among Africa's top avocado exporters

Kenya ranks among world's fastest growing exporters of avocado even as demand for the fruit grows in China and Europe.

Colombia tops the list of world's fastest avocado exporters, followed by Morocco. Kenya comes at position three, being the only country in East and Central Africa that produces avocado.

A 2019 half year survey shared at the ongoing World Avocado Congress in Colombia on Tuesday, indicated that Kenya has overtaken South Africa in the production of the fruit.

### TRADE PACT

Earlier this year, Kenya and China signed a trade pact that gave it the nod to export avocado to the Asian country.

A survey undertaken in 2018 puts Colombia, Morocco, Kenya and Germany as the fastest growing exporters of the fruit.

United Kingdom, Europe and Asia are the biggest markets for avocado. Kenya is also placed seventh in the list of leading exporters of avocado in 2018.

The list is dominated by Spanish speaking countries, with Mexico raking \$2.4 billion, Netherlands (\$ 733.8 billion), Peru (\$ 722.8m) in third, Spain (\$ 346 m), Chile (\$ 323.2 m), the USA (\$ 179 m) as before Kenya seals off the top seven having got \$ 118 million (Sh11.8 billion).

### AVOCADO EXPORTS

According to information from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the country earned Sh6.5 billion and Sh5.2 billion in 2016 and 2015 from avocado exports.



Kenyan delegates are attending the 2019 World Avocado Congress in Medellin, Colombia, as the country focuses on bidding to host the global event in 2023. Murang'a Governor Mwangi wa Iria is attending the conference.

Uasin Gishu County, a region traditionally known as the country's biggest producer of maize and wheat, is keen to produce avocados. The county government has already given seedlings to farmers in an aggressive push to put at least 1000 acres under avocado.

"We hope to uplift the economic status of the people of Uasin Gishu, there is a market for avocado and that is the place we want to train our focus on," Governor Jackson Mandago said as he hosted Belarus Ambassador to Kenya, Dmitry Kuptel.

### **RIGHT TRACK**

Murang'a County is Kenya's largest producer of avocado. Uasin Gishu County is educating farmers on the need to diversify agriculture by growing high value crops with avocado, coffee and macadamia.

Already, the county government of Uasin Gishu has facilitated and overseen an agreement between avocado exporter, Habex Agro and farmers.

"There is already an existing market in the world for avocado and as a county, we are on the right track."

"As a county government, our aim is to offer advice to our people to enable them improve their income," Deputy Governor and head of Uasin Gishu delegation to Medellin Daniel Chemno said.

Mr Chemno added: "Colombia is among the fastest growing exporters. Touring avocado farms and learning from a three-day conference will equip us with strategies on growing of this fruit."

"Coming here has been our eye opener and the knowledge gained here will be used to transform the lives of Uasin Gishu residents," he added..

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