

South African blueberry production soars with strong future growth predicted

"We are pleased to announce, based on industry figures, that South Africa's blueberry production for 2019/2020 increased to 18 000 tons from 11 700 the previous year."

"This impressive growth in production of 53% is testament to the growing investment in, and demand for, South African blueberries."

"Our projections for the year ahead indicate that blueberry production could reach 25 000 tons for the 2020/2021 season, a solid increase considering the impact of the Covid-19 crisis."

"The industry's growth is particularly good news for Limpopo and Mpumalanga where production is expected to grow by 136% and 102% respectively by 2025."

"Earlier this month we announced a new record in blueberry exports with 12 282 tons exported in 2019/20. Read together with the production figures, the data shows that exports account for 68% of the industry's production."

"The agriculture and food supply sectors have been deemed essential services during the national lockdown in response to COVID-19. This is allowing farmers to stay on schedule with the planting season."

"This year's blueberry planting season is already underway. We have every expectation that this year will be as productive as previous years, and that we will continue to see the growth that has allowed the industry to extend career and work opportunities to South Africa's labour force."



"We understand that the economy is in a tough position with a staggering number of job losses. The response of the South African government with a R500 billion relief package is unprecedented and desperately needed."

"Nevertheless, we are grateful that we are able to continue with our operations, allowing us to continue to employ South Africans, giving livelihoods to a growing number of families. All our stakeholders are of course taking every precaution to protect the health and safety of our labour force."

"The resilience of the agricultural sector during this pandemic is a crucial part of keeping the South African economy alive. In this industry at least, we can continue to attract export revenue into the country since global demand for our fruit remains high, especially amongst health-conscious consumers. The well-known immune-boosting properties of berries means that they are likely to remain in demand for the foreseeable future."

"The South African Berry Producers Association and its members remain firm in our commitment to South Africa and to our workforce. We will continue to strive to achieve growth every season, maintaining and creating new jobs in these trying time."

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