

Tanzania's avocado industry hits the ground running

Avocados have become Tanzania's latest green gold, bringing in at least US\$12m annually, up from almost zero five years ago, local website The Citizen reported. Less than a decade ago, avocado exports didn't exist. But data from Tanzania's private sector horticultural apex body, the Tanzania Horticultural Association (Taha), as well as the Avocado Catalogue 2020 report, show that exports jumped from 1,877 metric tons (MT) in 2014 to 9,000MT in 2019. Taha's chief development manager, Anthony Chamanga, said that farm-gate prices also rose from Sh450 (US\$0.19) in 2014 to Sh1,500 (US\$0.65) in 2020. It is understood that the government and Taha jointly worked to establish a facility in Njombe where farmers and store their fresh produce and is also a hub to connect with buyers. "Driven by dynamics in a global surge in prices and demand, the cultivation and trading of avocados is rapidly gaining traction among the local farmers, replacing coffee production in some areas," he said. There are over 10,000 avocado growers in the country, the report shows. The majority of exports go to Europe, which received 85% of Tanzanian avocado shipments. France imported the most, followed by the Netherlands and the U.K. Tanzania is the third largest avocado produce in Africa, after South Africa and Kenya. The main varieties are Hass and Fuerte. The harvest period is from January to March, and May to August. Plantation altitudes range from 1,100 to 1,900 meters above sea level. In a presentation at the World Avocado Congress in Colombia last September, Zac Bard of Westfalia Fruit predicted that Africa's avocado production could rise as quickly as the South American country's has over the last few years if the conditions are right.

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