



Private Bag X250, Pretoria, 0001; 20 Steve Biko Street, Pretoria, 0001
Tel.: 012 319 6000; Email: queries@nda.gov.za; Web: www.nda.gov.za

MEDIA STATEMENT

26 March 2026

SOUTH AFRICA SECURES NEW EXPORT CORRIDOR AS FIRST TABLE GRAPE SHIPMENT ARRIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, has welcomed the successful arrival of the first official shipment of South African table grapes to the Philippines, marking a significant milestone following the granting of market access in 2025.

This inaugural shipment represents the culmination of several years of sustained technical engagement between the South African and Philippine governments, underpinned by close collaboration with industry stakeholders and regulatory authorities. It reflects a shared commitment to science-based phytosanitary standards and the steady expansion of agricultural trade between the two countries.

“The arrival of this first shipment is more than a commercial transaction; it is the opening of a new trade corridor between South Africa and the Philippines,” Minister Steenhuisen said. “It demonstrates what can be achieved through sustained cooperation, mutual trust, and a shared ambition to grow our agricultural sectors.”

The Philippines is among the top 20 global importers of table grapes, with imports estimated at approximately 74,000 tonnes in 2024, equivalent to around 16 million cartons (4.5kg cartons). With a population of over 118 million people, a rapidly expanding middle class, and increasing urbanisation, the market presents a significant long-term opportunity for South African producers.

South Africa’s table grape industry continues to show steady growth. In the current 2025/26 season to date, exports have reached 76.6 million cartons, reflecting both the resilience of the sector and its ability to respond to evolving global demand.

Minister Steenhuisen emphasised that South Africa views the Philippines not simply as a destination market, but as a long-term partner in food security, trade, and agricultural development.

“We see this as the beginning of a sustained partnership,” he said. “South Africa remains committed to being a reliable, predictable supplier of high-quality, safe agricultural products, and to working closely with our Philippine counterparts to build a consistent and growing presence in this market over time.”

The Minister further noted that expanding into new markets such as the Philippines forms part of South Africa’s broader strategy to diversify export destinations, strengthen resilience, and reduce over-reliance on traditional trading partners.

“Southeast Asia represents a dynamic and increasingly important region for South African agriculture. Our approach is not to replace existing markets, but to broaden our footprint in a way that supports long-term growth, stability, and opportunity for our producers,” he said.

The table grape industry will now focus on establishing a firm foothold in the Philippine market during South Africa’s supply window, with a view to expanding volumes, varietal offerings, and market integration over the next three to five years.

Minister Steenhuisen expressed his appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to this achievement, including the South African Table Grape Industry (SATI), the Department of Agriculture, the South African Embassy in the Philippines, led by Her Excellency Ambassador Bartinah Ntombizodwa Radebe-Netshitenzhe, as well as the Philippine Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Plant Industry.

“This milestone is the result of coordinated effort across government and industry. It lays a strong foundation for deeper cooperation, expanded trade, and shared prosperity between our two nations,” the Minister concluded.

-End-

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms Joylene van Wyk

Director: Media Liaison Ministry of Agriculture

Email: joylenev@nda.gov.za or medialiaison@nda.agric.za

Mobile: 083 292 7399 or 063 298 5661

FMD HOTLINE NUMBER: 0860 246 640

Issued by: The Ministry of Agriculture