MINISTER
AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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 **21 November 2025**

Minister Steenhuisen Oversees Landmark Agricultural Cooperation Agreement with Vietnam

South Africa's agricultural sector marked a major diplomatic and trade milestone today as Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen saw a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam come to fruition which will secure a strengthened partnership and unlocking new opportunities for South African producers in one of Asia's fastest-growing markets.

The MoU, signed by Deputy Minister Rosemary Nokuzola Capa and Vietnam's Deputy Minister Nguyen Hoang Hiep, lays the foundation for expanded cooperation in crop production, plant protection, animal husbandry, veterinary services, research, development, technology transfer and agricultural trade.

The finalisation of the MoU comes three weeks after Minister Steenhuisen's visit to Vietnam in October, as part of President Ramaphosa's State Visit. Today's signing follows President Ramaphosa's request to all Ministers that they move swiftly, and with purpose, to expand South Africa's access to export markets.

Reflecting on the achievement, Minister Steenhuisen said, "At its heart, this partnership is built on trust and a shared ambition to strengthen sustainable agricultural systems that deliver economic growth and deepen the warm ties between our countries. This agreement strengthens our strategic presence in Asia and supports our mission to broaden market access for South African producers."

A Win for South African Producers

The Minister emphasised that the MoU is grounded in tangible progress. “We are building on real results. Our high-quality oranges have found a loyal and growing audience in Vietnam, where consumers recognise the value of South African produce,” he said.

Vietnam opened its market to South African oranges in May 2024 after the successful conclusion of a bilateral protocol. In the 2024 season, South Africa exported 53,311 fifteen-kilogram cartons of oranges to Vietnam. In 2025, that figure rose sharply to 209,569 cartons, representing a fourfold increase.

“This growth is a powerful vote of confidence in our exports. It reinforces South Africa’s position as the world’s second-largest citrus exporter and highlights the strong appetite in Asia that our farmers are ready to serve,” Minister Steenhuisen added.

Following the success of oranges, South Africa is now pushing for greater access for other citrus products, especially mandarins. With Vietnam’s annual agricultural import market valued at more than 30 billion US dollars, and South Africa’s current exports of edible fruits and nuts valued at around 54 million dollars, the potential for expansion is immense.

The MoU is designed to accelerate this growth by strengthening cooperation, fast-tracking market penetration and supporting South Africa’s ambition to unlock hundreds of millions of dollars in new agricultural export revenue. Such gains will flow directly into rural communities through job creation, increased income and more resilient local economies.

South Africa already exports maize, apples, pears and grapes to Vietnam, and the expanded cooperation framework is expected to increase volumes across these categories. Work is also underway to secure access for high-value niche products such as game meat, which will further diversify South Africa’s export basket.

Ultimately, strengthening ties with Vietnam supports South Africa’s broader objective of deepening access to the Southeast Asian region. As a stable and strategically positioned economy, Vietnam offers a valuable gateway for South African producers seeking to expand in Asia’s dynamic markets.

For media enquiries, please contact:
Ms Joylene van Wyk
Ministry of Agriculture Spokesperson
Email: joylenev@nda.agric.za
Mobile: 083 292 7399 or 063 298 5661

Issued by: The Ministry of Agriculture