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Media Statement

South African farmers see strong US exports performance in second quarter

The South African agricultural sector has demonstrated remarkable growth and resilience in the face of significant global trade headwinds, Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen notes as recent data show South Africa's exports have not only remained competitive, but have increased in the second quarter of 2025 to US$161 million, up by 26% from the same period in 2024.

"However, it is important to examine this performance with a forward-looking perspective. The recent imposition of a 30% tariff on our exports by the United States (US) has brought to light the urgent need to diversify our export markets—and enhance our competitiveness to mitigate the economic impact of losing preferential trade access." Minister Steenhuisen says the results of the second quarter of 2025 also highlight how urgent it is to resolve the ongoing tariff talks with the US. "Our capacity to gain steady, long-term access to this important market continues to be a top priority," he adds.

The figures speak for themselves. In the first quarter of 2025, South African agricultural exports to the US were US$118 million, up by 19% year-on-year.

"This growth is not merely a statistical anomaly, but a reflection of a bountiful harvest, a surge in high-quality produce, and the efficient operation of our ports. The products

leading this charge include a variety of fruits such as citrus, grapes, apples and pears, as well as nuts and wine. As we continue to engage in diplomatic negotiations and work towards a more favourable trade agreement, the focus remains on ensuring that our farmers and exporters can continue to thrive in the global marketplace, securing the future of our agricultural sector," Minister Steenhuisen emphasised.

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