

Argentina citrus company to expand Sundays River operations

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San Miguel to add a further 300 ha to River Bend Citrus farm



07-11-2012 - San Miguel, Argentina's largest lemon producer, is to add an additional 300 hectares to the River Bend Citrus farm near Addo that it bought last year.

River Bend Citrus has been in operation for several years.

The Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the project has now been released for public comment before being submitted to the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism for a Record of Decision.

The Basic Information Document on the project states that San Miguel plans to expand the operation over a period of four years.

The capital investment involved is estimated at R70 million – approximately R75 000 a hectare for the land and R125 000 per hectare for site preparation.

It is estimated that some 250 additional seasonal jobs lasting eight months will be created and a further 20 permanent employment opportunities.

San Miguel acquired River Bend Citrus with the objective of expanding the operation for the international market.

The document states that the purchase of River Bend Citrus "is part of San Miguel's strategy to become a leading citrus business player in the Southern Hemisphere.

"While San Miguel is currently known for its lemon exports, it is proposing to diversify the crops on the River Bend Citrus farm to export oranges, naartjies and clementines".

San Miguel has 7 500 hectares of citrus in Argentina, Uruguay and South Africa and packs an average of 1 900 tons of fruit daily.

Its South African headquarters is in Port Elizabeth.

In Phase 1, San Miguel plans to plant approximately 110 hectares in 2013/14 and a further 80 hectares the following year. An additional 73 hectares will be planted in 2015/16.

It is estimated that site preparation will take about 12 months involving landscaping and the levelling of the site; establishment of internal paved roads, installation of water reticulation and irrigation infrastructure, and construction of a balancing dam.

Eastern Cape, agriculture, citrus farming, River Bend Citrus, Addo, San Miguel, Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa,

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