

Botswana bans fresh South African imports over fruit fly outbreak

This week, Botswana authorities announced that fruits and vegetables from South Africa have been partially banned following an outbreak of Asian fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*).

Chief Agricultural Information & Public Relations Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture, Boikhutso Rabasha, informed traders and the public that all fruit and vegetable imports from South Africa, which are affected by the Asian fruit fly shall be sourced from Eastern and Western Cape only.

“This takes effect immediately. All permits, which were issued before the 5th March 2019 have been revoked and therefore no longer valid. Traders and the general public are advised to apply for new permits and are kindly requested to cooperate,” she said.

Rebasha explained that the fruit fly in Botswana is a pest of economic importance, which is extremely difficult to eradicate or control and a threat to the entire horticultural industry. The Asian fruit fly attacks and damages tomatoes, citrus fruits, cucumber, mango, cashew nuts, guava, green pepper, watermelons, squash, pumpkins, butternuts, banana, avocado and several wild host plants.

Botswana is largely dependent on South Africa for fruit and vegetables. Observers are of the view that the ban on imports will likely cause a shortage of fruit and vegetables in the country, as local produce would not meet the nation's demands.

Reports indicate that the country spends over US\$23.7 million per annum importing 34,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables to supplement the 41,000 tonnes produced locally.

Source: southerntimesafrica.com

(<https://southerntimesafrica.com/site/news/botswana-bans-fresh-produce-imports-from-sa-over-fruit-fly-outbreak>)

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(<http://eng.unitec-group.com/>).

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