



Energising Zimbabwe's Export Growth

# TRADING

## Post

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## ZIMTRADE TO SUPPORT RUSAPE BUSINESSES IN EXPORTS

**N**ATIONAL TRADE development and promotion organisation, ZimTrade, is deepening support to companies across the country to ensure that all districts are exporting.

In line with the Government's devolution agenda, ZimTrade, is targeting to increase contribution of all provinces to national exports, which will improve livelihoods at grassroots levels.

To achieve this, ZimTrade has been identifying potential exporters at all districts, and targets to develop their export capacities so that their products can compete well in international markets.

Recently, ZimTrade undertook company visits in Rusape and the tour established huge potential for the Manicaland district to diversify its economy mix by establishing a vibrant export industry.

Currently, Rusape is largely an agro economy, with its activities centred around commercial and subsistence farming.

However, during the engagements with companies in Rusape town, ZimTrade established that there is huge scope to turn the district into a giant agro-processor, with its products exported to regional markets and beyond.

One of the companies met whose export capacity will be developed with the assistance of ZimTrade is Health and Hygiene, processor of raw cotton into absorbent cotton wool for medical and feminine hygienic care and maternity pads.

Addressing ZimTrade delegation during visit to their company, Health and Hygiene Head of Operations, Brendon Muneya, said they are looking for assistance to break into export markets, which benefit their company.

"We want assistance in penetrating export markets as this will have good ripple effects on our operations as we will convert more materials into finished products and employ more people.

"Our products are already competitive as we are producing hygiene products from 100% cotton, unlike competition which is using synthetic wool or regenerated fibre," said Muneya.

ZimTrade Chief Executive Officer, Allan Majuru, said there are huge prospects for their products to perform well in regional markets that have a supply gap.

"There is demand and our market surveys have shown that countries in the region are importing from across the world such as

India and China, and our proximity offers key logistics advantages. "We will establish clear networks with buyers in regional markets that will take products from Rusape and distribute across their countries," he said.

Whilst ZimTrade will assist in establishing supply networks for Health and Hygiene, Majuru advised the company to register for trade agreements, that will eliminate some of the impediments such as duty requirements.

"Export capacity development will not make much sense if companies do not register for trade agreements when dealing with markets in the region.

"So we will assist Health and Hygiene to register for trade agreements, especially SADC trade agreements, and elimination of duty on their products will have a positive impact on their profit margin when they export into the region," he said.

Majuru also encouraged the company to explore partnerships with Zimbabwean businesses that have established presence in markets such as Zambia, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

"There is need to ride on successes of Zimbabwean-



companies currently trading in some of these markets in the region, and such hand-holding will make it easy for Health and Hygiene to land their products.

Trade agreements are designed to stimulate and encourage trade between the countries or group of countries who sign the agreement, by giving one another preferential treatment in the reduction or elimination of customs duties as well as removal or relaxation of quantitative restrictions.

For example, duty and import related taxes could constitute a large percentage of the final price for cross border transactions.

Thus, a reduction or elimination of the duty can give the exporter a substantial advantage in terms of cost over competitors from countries that do not have similar trade agreements.

Zimbabwe currently has four operational preferential bilateral trade agreements under which exporters can benefit.

These agreements were entered with Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, and Namibia.

The Zimbabwe-Botswana trade agreement ratified in 1988 offers reciprocal duty-free trade on all products grown, wholly produced, or manufactured wholly or partly from imported inputs subject to a 25 percent local content requirement.

With Malawi, this is a reciprocal trade agreement that has been in place since 1995, with 25 percent domestic value-added requirements.

In Mozambique, the focus of the agreement that has been in place since coming into force in 2005 is to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers and to cooperate in customs and trade promotion.

The agreement provides for duty-free trade between the two members with the rules of origin specifying a 25 percent domestic value added.

Excluded from the agreement are refined and unrefined sugar,



Coca-Cola/Schweppes soft drinks, firearms, ammunition and explosives, motor vehicles and cigarettes.

With regards to Zimbabwe-Namibia, there is a reciprocal agreement in effect since 1992, subject to rules of origin that require at least 25 percent local content for manufactured products and that Zimbabwe and Namibia should, as exporters, be the last place of substantial manufacturing.

Further to these agreements, Zimbabwe has been implementing the SADC Trade Protocol since 2001.

This Protocol is an agreement between SADC Member States to reduce customs duties and other barriers to trade on products from each other.

By lowering customs duties and removing other barriers to trade, the SADC Member States intend to promote economic growth and regional integration.

The regime is operational between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and Zimbabwe and Malawi and is used for goods that have been grown or wholly produced

in the COMESA Region.

The trader will complete a simplified customs document (declaration form) and a simplified COMESA certificate of origin.

These documents are filled in at the border post by the trader and are stamped and certified by a customs official.

For exporters within SADC Member States, they enjoy preferential tariff rates are granted to products that meet the SADC Rules of Origin and are accompanied by a SADC Certificate Origin.

In addition to this, Zimbabwean exporters also enjoy trading under the COMESA Free Trade Area, designed to promote regional integration through trade development and to develop their natural and human resources for the mutual benefit of all their peoples.

COMESA also has a Simplified Trade Regime (STR), which helps small trader to benefit from the preferential rates enjoyed by commercial traders when importing or exporting goods within the COMESA Bloc.







## WILLOWTON EYES REGIONAL MARKETS

**A**GRO-PROCESSING giant, Mutare-based Willowton Group, plans to expand into more regional markets by leveraging on the quality of their products and proximity to SADC countries.

Willowton Group is one of the leading producers of edible oil and soaps in Zimbabwe, and product range include D'Lite and Sunfoil cooking oil, Sona beauty soap and Britelite laundry soap.

The company is in the process of setting up a margarine plant to manufacture its South African established brand ROMI and Sunshine D, with bulk of production earmarked for export markets.

Currently, Sona is their product that is exported to Regionally and the company plans to ride on the success of the product to include more of their products in the market.

The company also plans to spread their market across southern Africa, where there is demand for Zimbabwe-produced edible oils and other fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs).

The demand for soap in SADC is huge, as shown by the total value imported in 2021, which was around US\$ 1,1 billion, according to Trade Map.

ZimTrade has conducted several surveys across southern Africa and some of the top markets that presents opportunities for the Willowton include Mozambique, which is a stone throw away from their factory, Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Malawi, and Namibia. With strategic logistics route, Angola and Tanzania are also lucrative market for Willowton products.

Speaking during a tour of their facility by ZimTrade recently, Willowton Managing Director, Suleman Darsot, said they are plans to source raw materials locally, which will make it easy to meet export requirements.

He said they plan to buy most of raw materials from local farmers and that way they empower communities.

This way, Darsot plans to make sure the bulk of the raw, if not all raw materials used by Willowton are produced locally, which will make it easy to qualify for benefits that come with bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements that Zimbabwe is signatory to.

Going forward, the company will receive assistance from ZimTrade Eastern Region offices on a number of areas, including to par-

ticipate at export promotion events.

Trade exhibitions, as organized events, will allow Willowton to showcase and demonstrate their products and services, meet with industry partners and customers, study activities of competition, and examine recent market trends and opportunities.

Some of the trade fairs earmarked for Willowton, that are open to other Zimbabwean companies, include the Zambia Agriculture and Commercial Show, Maputo International Trade Fair (FACIM), and Botswana Global Export.

Further to these trade fairs, ZimTrade will also facilitate engagements between Willowton and buyers who will be visiting Zimbabwe during several inward buyer missions that will take place this year.

For example, ZimTrade is organising for more than 10 buyers from Kenya, Malawi, and Equatorial Guinea to visit Zimbabwe and engage in business-to-business meetings with local companies.

Here, the buyers will also visit manufacturers at their premises to get a better appreciation of local production processes.



# GETTING PREPARED FOR A PROMOTION EVENT: TIPS



**As a standard, it is determined that there is no substitute for adequate preparedness by the participants.**

- Firstly, companies should develop objectives for participating in the event as these will be used to measure the effectiveness of their participation.
- Companies also need to develop appropriate promotional materials and graphics that will attract visitors to their stands.
- Preparedness also means mobilizing potential visitors to the stand and setting up meetings, prior to the event.
- Evaluation conducted by ZimTrade have shown that companies that mobilise potential buyers prior to participating at a trade exhibition have better chances of getting orders.
- During the event itself, it is imperative that the booth is manned by trained staff who are competent in handling questions on all aspects of the products on show.
- After the event, it is important for participants to follow up on all leads obtained from the trade show.
- Quick follow-ups increases on chances of sales as the first one to follow-up usually wins the sale.
- In preparation for these trade fairs, ZimTrade has a number of programmes designed to assist companies to be competitive at trade exhibitions.
- For example, within the Marketing and Branding for International Competitiveness (MBIC) training programme offered by ZimTrade, there are two specific modules, which are Effective Trade Fair Participation and How to Gather Competitive Intelligence.





# A FRESH OPPORTUNITY FOR ZIMBABWEAN FARMERS ON UK HORTICULTURE MARKET

by Karen Mukwedeya

The United Kingdom (UK) is currently facing a shortage of basic fresh goods.

Some people in the UK are facing challenges to get hold of produce such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers and reports state that the shortage could last for another month or in a worst case scenario, this period could last longer.

The Guardian recently reported that certain fresh vegetables and fruits are hard to come by in the UK as a result of an unfortunate combination of poor weather reducing the harvest in Europe and north Africa, as well lower supplies from UK and Dutch producers hit by the jump in energy bills to heat glasshouses.

According to the trade group the British Retail Consortium (BRC), the UK imports around 95 percent of its tomatoes and 90 percent of its lettuces in the winter months, most of them from Spain and North Africa.

At this time of year, Britain relies on Spain, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt for the bulk of fresh produce, mostly salad ingredients.

However, these crops have been affected by unusually cold weather last month, including intense night frosts, while tomato plants have also been damaged or killed by disease in particular the tomato brown rugose virus.

As a result of the shortage, there has been a trend in price increase of fresh produce.

Reports reveal that the price of tomatoes has increased as much as fourfold in the past year, from £5 a case to £20 a case, according to the Federazione Italiana Cuochi UK (FIC UK), a chefs' association.

The price of canned tomatoes has also doubled, from £15 a case to £30.

Some major supermarket chains, such as Tesco, have limited the number of cucumbers and tomatoes that can be purchased by customers tweeting that, "For a short period of time we're limiting tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers to 3 per customer."

So what kind of opportunities does this present for Zimbabwean farmers?

**Firstly**, Zimbabwe is well known for having favourable climatic conditions and soils for Horticultural produce. As such the horticultural sector is recognised as a low hanging fruit for Zimbabwe's exports, meaning that if structured correctly, Zimbabwe could highly benefit from exports of organic fresh produce to the world.

There are many export opportunities that local farmers can tap into, including cucumbers, peppers, berries, tomatoes, chillies, peas, fine beans, melons, pineapples. Other products such as sweet potatoes are also growing in demand in UK following shortages of fresh vegetables.

In this case of shortages, the simple rules of economics apply, where local companies are guaranteed to succeed by increasing horticultural yield for export to meet the current global demand.

Local companies are likely to benefit even more if they value add these fresh products so that they last longer to be transported to European countries, that are currently facing the devastating effects of climate change.

By value adding fresh produce, local



companies also stand a chance to earn more on the European market, and on top of that they will have the added profit benefits of supplying organic food which is of high importance to the European Market.

ZimTrade, the national trade development and promotion organisation is aware of this opportunity and with the assistance from government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, efforts are already in place to ensure the country will benefit.

### PROVINCIAL CLUSTERS

Provincial clusters are a great way to harness Zimbabwe's existing provincial and increase yield by streamlining production of goods.

The idea is to get small-holder farmers working together in cluster groups to focus on key produce that is in demand locally and internationally thereby empowering individuals in their current communities and increasing exports in the process.

As mentioned earlier Zimbabwe is lucky to have a favourable climate and soils that have the capacity for horticultural produce, as such certain regions such as Manicaland have the privilege of being able to produce different horticultural products through out the year.

Over US\$200 million worth of key niche horticultural products already exported from the Manicaland and Masvingo provinces combined.

With correct standardisation measures in place, these small holder clusters can produce more horticultural produce for export.

### SMALLHOLDER ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

ZimTrade is also working on a organic certification programme that will small holder farmers attaining organic certification to be able to export their produce.

The Ndiyadzo pineapple certification project saw over 40 small-holder farmers, in Chipinge attain



ing organic certification and exporting pineapple to the Netherlands.

With greater returns on the export market for organic produce, the project proved to be a success in empowering local farmers and getting them to participate in increasing exports for the country.

As such the project is still on going and seeks to certify more smallholder farmers for exports to Europe and beyond.

### TRADE PROMOTION

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## WE RECEIVED OVERWHELMING RESPONSE AT FRUIT LOGISTICA: **NUTRIFARM**

**F**IRST TIME exhibitor, NutriFarm says the positive response they received at Fruit Logistica fair in Berlin, Germany was exceptional, thanks to ZimTrade who facilitated their participation.

NutriFarm Director Rumbidzai Makamure said the largest fresh fruit and vegetable fair in the world was an eye opener, revealing a much larger market for her products than she had anticipated.

"I just never imagined the scale of the market, that it could be that big and we were actually surprised because the interest just blew us away," she said.

Of the products on display, Makamure said ginger and garlic were a major hit among buyers, who said the Zimbabwean quality and taste was superior compared to competition coming from other countries.

Narrating her experience, Makamure said, from the first day, potential buyers wanted to source from her whenever they tasted her fresh garlic which is organically produced.

"On the first day, some guy came to our stand and asked to taste our garlic, which we told him was 100 percent organic.

"After the first bite, he said this is exactly what I am looking for and asked if we can supply him with at least six containers every week and he was willing to conclude the deal on that day.

"Soon after the experience another buyer came and asked if we can supply him with two containers of garlic every two weeks.

"This response was overwhelming, and it made us realise that this can be done, it is doable.

"It was an eye opener, I just didn't expect my eyes will be opened that much and I realised that this year we really have to work in ensuring all our produce meet the international standards.

"We are also working on our Global GAP and SMETA certification as these are a requirement in dealing with the international market.", said Makamure.

Going forward, NutriFarm plans to expand their production to meet the growing demand for Zimbabwe-grown fresh produce.

The business also plans to value add their produce into, for example, spice and paste, which will enable them to earn more in export markets.

The experience by NutriFarm demonstrate the positive impact of Fruit Logistica for local businesses that are looking to tap into global horticulture market.

Fruit Logistica is the world's leading international trade fair for the fruit and vegetable industry and this year, more than 15 Zimbabwean farmers exhibited their products to a diverse group of international buyers.

Fruit Logistica provided a platform for Zimbabwean businesses in fruit and vegetables to meet potential buyers, packagers, handling experts

and other interested parties from across the globe. significant social benefits, as it has helped to create a more inclusive and equitable economy.

By giving women entrepreneurs the resources, they need to succeed, the NEXT Program has created an environment where women entrepreneurs can thrive and contribute to the economic growth of Zimbabwe.

The success of the program is a testament to the potential of women to lead and drive economic development in the country.

By providing access to the resources and support they need to succeed, the NEXT She-Exporter Program has enabled Zimbabwe to create a more equitable and inclusive economy.

This success should serve as an example to other countries looking to promote gender equality and economic inclusion.

With over 75,000 trade visitors an around 3,000 companies who participated at the event, Zimbabwean businesses had an opportunity to interact with buyers, engage in business-to-business meetings and create new avenues for their products.

Over US\$5 million orders were confirmed at the event, and around US\$15 million are under negotiation.

The Zimbabwean showcased products such as ginger, garlic, mange tout and sugar snap peas, pineapples, fine beans, sweet potatoes, avocados, macadamia nuts, mangoes, baby corn, blueberries, and chilies.

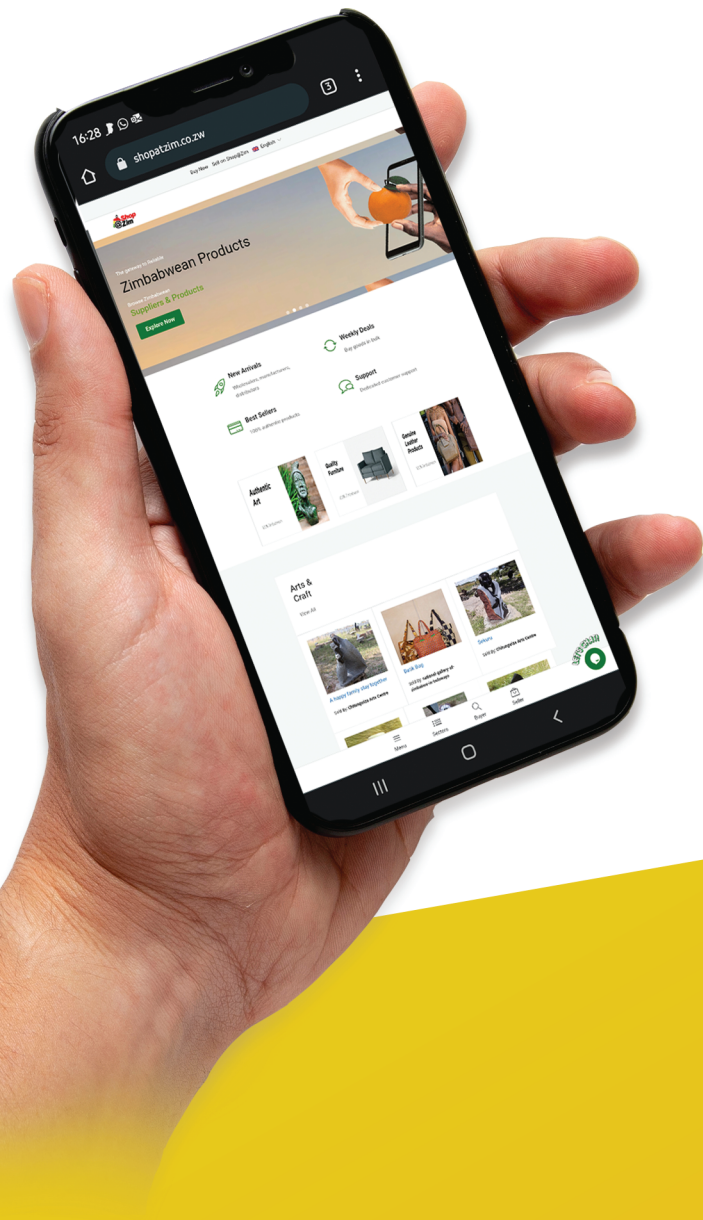
This year, the exhibition was even better as benefits to participating companies will have spin-off benefits to more players back in Zimbabwe, as demand for fruits and vegetables is growing.

For example, to meet the huge demand of ginger and garlic, NutriFarm intends to create an outgrower system that will allow smallholder farmers to access international markets.



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## FRESH PLANET BUILDS A NEW PACK HOUSE TO EASE CONSOLIDATION

### FARMERS AROUND

Murombedzi in Zvimba district, Mashonaland West province are set to access regional and international markets as the new pack house will create a seamless process for consolidation.

The pack house, which will run 24 hours daily once completed, will process produce such as peas, chillies, fine beans, garlic, and ginger, drawn from farmers in and around Murombedzi.

Speaking during a visit by ZimTrade to the facility recently, Freshplanet Director, Blessing Chinduru, said the absence of a pack house and cold room facility around Murombedzi Growth Point has made it difficult for farmers to engage in meaningful horticulture production.

Currently, most farmers in the area concentrate on maize and tobacco production.

However, with the coming in of the new packhouse, Freshplanet is expected to boost access to export markets by farmers in Murombedzi through consolidation.

"The market for Zimbabwean produce is big as buyers prefer our products, which they say are of high quality.

"Given the positive outlook, we need make sure that it is easy for new players to access facilities that are crucial in production for export markets.

"This new facility will smoothen processes that take place between taking the produce from the farm and sending them to regional and international markets," he said.

The consolidation drive in Murombedzi being spearheaded by Freshplanet is one of the necessary interventions that have already been identified as enabling for farmers, especially smallholder farmers, to access export markets.

In Zimbabwe, horticulture performance is deeply rooted in the ability to consolidate and aggregate products from farmers from different production zones.

To integrate smallholder farmers into the high paying export market there is need to consolidate their products for destinations which require huge quantities such as the Netherlands, United Kingdom and China.

To achieve this, concerted efforts must be made to mainstream group cohesion and embarking on aggregation as a way that these farmers can tap into these lucrative destinations.

ZimTrade will work with Freshplanet to identify and capacitate selected farms with export potential to onboard them in production of high value crops.

This will ultimately increase volume of the country's exports and reduce cost of freight.

Once the new pack shed at Freshplanet becomes operational, there

are indications that it will have positive impact on the export competitiveness.

It should be emphasized that export market is a game of right volumes to attract buyers and meet demand.

For smallholder farmers, producing enough of the required horticultural products can be achieved if they arrange themselves into groupings, consolidate their products emanating from their small holder plots and send to targeted market.

Relatively small-scale supplies from smallholder farmers need bulking into a sizeable volume that can be readily and economically transported, sorted, processed, and stored by processors, wholesalers, exporters and retailers.

Smallholder farmers in the country are largely located in the rural areas, are often geographically dispersed, and have limited access to road and communication infrastructure, thus raising the cost of market participation.

For high value horticultural products, that are often perishable the situation is even difficult.

Thus, aggregation brings together small farmers and buyers to achieve economies of scale, create market signal, and provide access to adjacencies.





## QUALITY OF MUTARE TIMBER PRODUCER EXCITES REGIONAL BUYERS

**M**utare-based timber producer, Allied Timber Zimbabwe, is confident of their products to perform well in the region following the successes and positive feedback received from buyers in markets they are currently supplying.

Allied Timbers Zimbabwe (Pvt) Ltd (ATZ) is the largest timber resource base in Zimbabwe and its product range include trusses, boards, doors, pressured treated gum poles and batten doors.

Currently ATZ has managed to penetrate export markets such as Mozambique, Botswana, and Zambia.

Speaking during recent engagements with ZimTrade, ATZ Sales and Marketing Manager, Talkmore Kanda, said they are optimistic of good returns in markets such as Malawi, Namibia, and DRC.

Kanda said the quality of their timber is high, and buyers are keen on importing from Zimbabwe as local products are most preferred by consumers.

Going forward, the company is targeting to increase value-added products that earn more in the retail market.

“Our focus is to do more in terms of having finished products that selling as loose timber and we would rather sale as, for example, trusses, doors among other products.

“In the long run, we are also targeting to increase our portfolio of doors as we are currently

producing batten doors only,” said Kanda.

ZimTrade will assist ATZ to establish new markets as well as strengthen their presence in their traditional markets such as Mozambique and Zambia.

Last year, ZimTrade facilitated the participation of ATZ at Maputo International Trade Fair, the largest exhibition in Mozambique.

At the event, the company established links that will make it easy to reach larger market size in Mozambique.

From interactions with several buyers from the building and construction sector in southern African countries, it is clear Zimbabwean timber – including ATZ products – is of high quality and can compete well in these markets.

Zimbabwe is home to several types of wood that can be used, for example, structural purposes in building and construction; treated and untreated poles for transmission lines; hardwood for furniture manufacturing; and industrial wood for packaging, pallets, and cable drums.

Research conducted by ZimTrade in countries like Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia have revealed massive potential for Zimbabwean timber that even current producers are failing to meet.

For local producers who want to venture into the export market, indications are that the work has been cut out for them as current exporters have created a strong perception that Zimbabwe is a

source of quality timber.

One buyer from Botswana mentioned that 50 percent of the timber coming from Zimbabwe goes into the construction of houses in Botswana and that the market has acquired a good taste for Zimbabwean timber to the extent that they can easily recognise it in a pile of various timber from other countries in the region.

Besides exporting timber as a product, value addition to produce furniture, boards and doors is required regionally.

Local businesses need to ensure that majority of wood exports are value added products and this can improve commodity demand in export markets.

Furniture is a general household need and Zimbabwe has manufacturing companies which produce high quality products which can be exported regionally. Exporting the timber as value-added products would earn the country the much-needed foreign currency whilst creating jobs.

Local producers could consider producing collapsible modular designs that can be easily assembled at the final market or by the end user at their home.

Here, the cost per unit in production and transportation is cheaper and this can make Zimbabwe-designed wood products highly competitive on the global market.





## ZIMTRADE PLEDGES SUPPORT TO YOUTH-LED SMES IN RUSAPE

**LINE** with its mandate of energising Zimbabwe's export growth, ZimTrade pledged to support and integrate youth-led businesses in mainstream export businesses.

This follows the visit by ZimTrade to Nyanga Craft Ciders, a youth-owned small business in Rusape that produce top-quality craft ciders.

Initially the company was formed to add value to the Nyanga apples by making beverages from the apples, later on incorporated other fruits to meet the palates of diversified Zimbabweans hence the introduction of fruit ciders.

The aim was to achieve production of a local cider made by local ingredients and to get people all over the world to taste the deliciousness of Nyanga fruits in a bottle

To date, buyers who have tasted their products are confi-

dent of huge success in international markets, where demand for healthier beverages has been on an increase in recent years.

Due to Zimbabwe's non-GMO policy, Nyanga Craft Ciders produce their products using locally grown fruits, which in most cases are organic.

The company has been receiving support from ZimTrade, through the Eagles' Nest Youth Export Incubation programme, designed to inculcate an export culture among youth-led enterprises.

During the programme, Nyanga Craft Ciders, together with other participants, received practical solutions that will aid in navigating some of the difficult business terrain.

The Eagles' Nest programme focused on areas such as product quality and controls, branding and packaging, marketing and

negotiation skills, and business financial retail giants that want to take out product in bulk.

"However, we are facing capacity challenges to meet orders as we currently do not have enough equipment to meet the huge demand from retailers across the country," said he said.

In addressing some of the capacity concerns, Allan Majuru, said ZimTrade will assist the youth-led SME to unlock some support from local financiers.

"You need to have financials, whether big or small because anyone who is going to give you money need to be convinced that you are disciplined when it comes to spending grants or loans.

"We will engage some financing partners so that they come with favourable terms to support youth-led businesses such as Nyanga Craft Ciders because requirements of most current models are usually restrictive," said Majuru.

Conventional funding options often require collateral, making it difficult for young people to get funding, thus by focusing on selected viable businesses, banks will provide financial literacy that will make investment worthwhile.

and administration literacy.

Although the product has been improved to match international standards, the business still faces challenges to meet huge demand orders.

Nyanga Craft Ciders Founder and Head Cider Maker, Malvin Chieza, said the nature of their business requires long term investment as the product matures over time before selling.

Due to current constraints, it has been difficult to produce product that can be supplied over longer periods of time.

"We have huge interest from local





## THE IMPORTANCE OF POST-HARVEST COOLING SYSTEMS FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

by Tawanda Chiware

**F**resh produce is alive. As such, there are biological processes that impact the quality and are responsible for the deterioration process.

These biological factors result in, for example, sprouting, rooting, changes in colour, changes in flavour, changes in texture, changes in nutrition, ethylene production, water loss, and pathological deterioration.

While biological processes are innate to fresh fruits and vegetables, the rate of biological processes is affected by environmental factors such as relative humidity, temperature, velocity of the air, and composition of gases in the atmosphere.

Post-harvest cooling rapidly removes field heat from freshly harvested commodities before shipment, storage, or processing and is essential for many perishable crops.

Proper postharvest cooling can:

- Suppress enzymatic degradation and respiratory activity (softening)
- Slow or inhibit water loss (wilting)
- Slow or inhibit the growth of decay-producing microorganisms (moulds and bacteria)
- Reduce production of ethylene (a ripening agent) or minimize the product's reaction to ethylene.
- Postharvest cooling rapidly removes field heat from freshly

harvested commodities before shipment, storage, or processing and is essential for many perishable crops.

### SELECTING THE BEST COOLING METHODS FOR EXPORTS

#### The nature of the product

Different types of produce have different cooling requirements.

For example, strawberries and broccoli require near-freezing temperatures, whereas summer squash or tomatoes would be damaged by such low temperatures.

#### Product packaging requirements

The best choice of cooling method may depend on whether the produce is in a box, bin, or bag as requested by the importer or buyer.

The package design can influence the method and rate of cooling.

**Product flow capacity:** Some methods of cooling are much faster than others. If the volume of produce to be cooled per season, per day, or per hour is large, it may be necessary to use a faster cooling method than would be used for lower volumes.

#### Economic constraints

Construction and operating costs vary among cooling methods used by many farmers in Zimbabwe.

The expense of cooling must be justified by higher export prices and other economic benefits. In some

cases— for example, when the volume of produce is low – the more expensive methods cannot be made to pay for themselves.

### COMMON PRODUCE COOLING METHODS

#### Room cooling (Cold rooms)

Is simply a matter of placing produce in an insulated room equipped with refrigeration units to chill the air. It may be used with most commodities but may be too slow for some that require quick cooling.

It is effective for storing precooled produce but in some cases cannot remove field heat rapidly enough.

It one of the most used methods in Zimbabwe.

#### Forced-air cooling (Blast Room)

Is used in conjunction with a cooling room and can be used effectively on most packaged produce.

To increase the cooling rate, additional fans are used to pull cool air through the packages of produce.

Although the cooling rate depends on the air temperature and the rate of airflow through the packages, this method is usually 75 to 90 percent faster than room cooling.

When forced-air cooling fans are added to an existing cooling room, it may be necessary to increase the size of the refrigeration unit to accommodate the additional cooling load.

#### Hydrocooling

It can be used on most commodities that are not sensitive to wetting.

(Wetting often encourages the growth of microorganisms.) In this process, chilled water flows over the produce, rapidly removing heat.

At typical flow rates and temperature differences, water removes heat about 15 times faster than air.

#### Icing

Top or liquid icing may be used on a variety of commodities. In the top icing process, crushed-



ice is added to the container over the top of the produce by hand or machine. Icing is particularly effective on dense packages that cannot be cooled with forced air. Because the ice has a residual effect, this method works well with commodities that have a high respiration rate, such as sweet corn and broccoli.

### PRODUCE AND THE COOLING SYSTEM REQUIRED

PRODUCE	SUITABLE COOLING METHODS
Apples	R, F, H
Asparagus	H, I
Fine Beans	R, F, H
Blueberries	R, F
Cucumbers	F, H
Oranges - Citrus	R, F, H
Peas (Sugar Snap, MT)	F, H
Peppers (inc. Chili)	R, F
Potatoes	R, F
Strawberries	R, F
Sweet potatoes	R
Tomatoes	R, F
Watermelon	R

**KEY**

- \***R** – Room Cooling.
- \***F** – Forced-Air Cooling.
- \***H** – Hydrocooling.
- \***I** – Icing
- \*\***CAUTION:** Certain commodities may sustain appreciable chill damage at temperatures 10-20°F above the freezing temperature.





## How does the WTO/TBT Enquiry Point operate?

In order to facilitate access to the ePing platform, the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) is the National Enquiry Point of TBT related issues in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of Enquiry Point is to provide to its subscribers access to key information included in the notifications made by members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement), and to collect and fulfill subscriber requests for information related to those notifications.

Enquiry Point allows users to create a custom profile to follow, review, and comment on WTO TBT notifications by country and/or product sector of interest to them.

## As the WTO National Enquiry Point in Zimbabwe, SAZ provides the following services:

- Disseminate international mandatory measures which may affect trade to local stakeholders for commenting
- Forward comments received on domestic and foreign measures to the appropriate regulatory agency for consideration;
- Respond to technical enquiries on a variety of topics including: standards and technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures and
- Assist with the Registration for regular TBT updates with ePing <https://epingalert.org/>

For more information on how to register on ePing, kindly get in touch with Prosper Josiah Machuve, Librarian at SAZ on [standards@saz.org.zw](mailto:standards@saz.org.zw)

# THE WTO ePING PLATFORM

*by Standards Association of Zimbabwe*

**T**he ePing platform is a free online web service, offered by the World Trade Organization (WTO).

It provides private and public stakeholders with up-to-date information on the regulations in export markets around the world, including product requirements and standards.

The ePing service is of potential interest to all types of stakeholders, including government agencies, standardizing bodies, producers, exporters, importers, service providers, SMEs, multinationals, international organizations, research institutes, NGOs etc.

## MAIN FUNCTIONS OF EPING

The main functions of the ePing platform are as follows:

- Receive updates on notifications based on products/market preferences
- Search notifications on new or updated product regulations
- Search trade concerns discussed in the WTO SPS and TBT Committees.
- Search NNAs/NEPs contact information
- Facts & figures: Member profiles / Notifications statistics and graphs
- Browse notifications on new and updated product standards and regulations.
- Find information on trade concerns discussed in the WTO SPS and TBT committees.
- Sign up to receive email alerts and to follow notifications on products and/or markets of interest.
- Reach out to national and international counterparts.
- It provides a single-entry point for users to submit and track information on product requirements while enhancing coordination among government agencies and the private sector.
- It makes it easy for businesses, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, to track a specific sector or market through filtering options and offers several communication features to share information on and discuss notified measures.
- Please visit the WTO SPS and TBT gateways for more information on these Agreements.





## PRODUCT FOCUS: CITRUS FRUITS

*by Kupakwashe Midzi*

**C**itrus Fruits (Fresh or Chilled - HS 0805) are a genus of plants which belong what is called the rue family (Rutaceae), and they yield pulpy fruits which are covered with fairly thick skins.

Some of the common and economically important fruits of this group are oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits, and tangerines.

Some of the popular varieties of these citrus fruits include:

- Sweet oranges: Valencia, navel
- Mandarins: Satsuma, clementine, emperor, nova
- Limes: lime bears, key lime, thai lime
- Grapefruit: White, ruby red,
- Lemons: Eureka, Meyer, Lisbon

The plants of Citrus fruits are typically evergreen trees with glossy oval-shaped leaves and the flowers are usually white and very fragrant.

The fruits are a type of modified berry, and the flesh is divided into segments packed with tiny juice-filled vesicles.

The peel of the fruits is leathery

and studded with oil glands.

The Citrus fruits are most notable for their fragrance, and this is due to flavonoids and limonoids and as such can be processed into fragrances and oils.

The juice of the fruit contains a high quantity of citric acid and other organic acids giving them their characteristic sharp flavour.

### PRODUCING/CULTIVATING CITRUS

Citrus fruit is regarded as one of the most grown horticultural crops worldwide, and it is also the most traded horticultural commodity in the world.

Citrus crop is grown in developed and developing countries as well.

Among the types of fruit which are usually cultivated, oranges account for more than 50% of the world citrus production and, according to FAO, oranges are the most widely traded, followed by tangerines, lemons, and grapefruits respectively.

Some of the major citrus producing countries include China, Brazil and the USA and the industry is

quite diverse as the fruits can be grown on small, medium, large, and very large scale.

The production of citrus fruits can be started on 0.5 hectares or less and if this is managed well the value of the orchard increases as time goes on.

The trees can be grown from either budding or grafting, common of which are grafts.

Citrus fruits predominantly grow in a many different types of soil and weather conditions and this could arguably be why the origin of citrus fruits in some circles is an ongoing debate as the fruit has spread to many different regions across the world.

It is important however to avoid extremities in terms of the prevailing conditions under which the trees are grown.

For example, citrus plants are susceptible to cold or sub-freezing temperatures and production may also be subdued in areas which are prone to extreme drought.

Some of the best climates for citrus production include tropical and sub-tropical climates, depending on the type of trees and variety of fruit.



The plants require regular supply of water and at times it may be necessary to invest in irrigation, especially if one is to maximise the full potential of the tree, to ensure that the plants do not suffer from moisture stress and hence suppress growth and production.

Pruning is an important process when it comes to citrus.

It is important to manage the growth and size of the trees and when they become too big and

grow into one another it is recommended to prune.

It may also present challenges when it is time to harvest if the trees become too big and may result in some losses as a result of failure to harvest all the fruit at the right time.

Branches which have overgrown and start to touch the ground may obstruct the removal of fruit which will be underneath the tree and can impede irrigation.

These overgrown branches may

also promote infestation of the trees by ants and as such should also be removed.

Any dead wood should also be removed regularly.

As is the case with most crops and agricultural production, weeding is important in order to keep the area which falls under the canopy free and clean as weeds would present competition for the plants for nutrients and water and can also harbour pathogens which would be harmful to the trees.

### Some of the common pests and diseases that farmers should look out for and be aware of include

PESTS	DISEASES
False Coddling Moth (FCM)	Root Rot
Orange dog caterpillar	Citrus Greening
Aphids	Powdery Mildew
Citrus leafminer	
Citrus thrips	
Fruit Flies	

*\*this list is not exhaustive*

Citrus plants are perennial in terms of their growth habit, and it is believed that the average lifespan of a well-kept citrus tree is 50 years or more.

### Citrus Value Addition

Citrus fruits can be grown largely for consumption of the fruit, however, various value addition opportunities exist for further processing the fruit into other products which may fetch higher prices.

In addition to the fresh fruit, the most obvious first option would be to process the fruit into fruit juice from the pulp of the fruit.

However, this is not the only value addition which one may consider after producing their citrus fruits.

Other products include:

- **Comminuted citrus base** – a product made from whole citrus fruits by milling it whole, or by mixing the juice concentrate with milled peels.

This can be used as a base for beverages or to add an intense taste to some food products as this has a stronger flavour.

- **Peel Oil** – a product made by extracting oil from the peels of citrus fruits.

This oil is used by flavour manufacturers as they produce different flavour compounds which are further needed in industries such as cosmetics, chemical and beverage industries

- **Confitures** – The citrus fruits can be processed into jams, preserves, jelly, marmalades and molasses. Citrus fruits also constitute a key source of vitamin C and also provide a host of other essential nutrients.



## THE EU IMPOSES NEW REGULATION ON CITRUS IMPORTS (REGULATION 2022/959)

by Archford Mabuka

**E**uropean Union which is Zimbabwe's largest importer of citrus (re-exports from South Africa) passed a regulation which will require pre-colling of citrus imports into EU.

The measure at issue is the import restrictions imposed by the EU on citrus fruit. In particular, the EU imposes phytosanitary requirements relating to *Thaumetobia leucotreta* (false codling moth) on the importation of citrus fruit.

Until the new regulation, citrus fruits were freely imported to the EU provided that it was subject to an effective systems approach or another effective post-harvest treatment to ensure freedom from false codling moth.

As of 14 July 2022, the EU gazetted that for the first time, that imports of citrus fruit must undergo specified mandatory cold treatment processes and precooling steps for specific periods (up to 25 days of cold treatment) before importation.

In cases, these processes must be conducted in the exporting country before the consignments are shipped.

These phytosanitary requirements apply to all imports, irrespective of whether the importing Member has an effective systems approach like "Citrus Systems Approach" or has another effective post-harvest treatment to ensure freedom from false codling moth.

The EU's new requirements impose significant changes on the importation of citrus fruit (Adapted from WT/DS613/1 G/L/1430 G/SPS-GEN/2056).

The transitional regime applied from 14 July 2022 to all imports entering the EU market until 31 December 2022, while the definitive regime started being applied from 1 January 2023.

This measure will affect Zimbabwean exports of citrus, as companies are still trying to install the pre-colling systems as it is also a requirement for the export of citrus to China under the new citrus protocol.

However, the January 2023 statistics from ZimStats showed there was a 13 percent increase in the exports of horticulture from US\$2.4 million in January 2022 to US\$2.7 million.

According to the same data citrus exports in January 2023 amounted to US\$123,000 up from in January 2022 US\$2,000.

Citrus season in Zimbabwe is from March to September therefore we expect the export figures to start picking up.

Although the new measures might delay exports for companies that are still to meet the new requirements, there is scope to diversify markets, which will ensure continued exports for farmers in the subsector.

Zimbabwe in on the quest to diversify its export markets, a mandate which resulted in Zimbabwe and China signing a citrus protocol in 2021.

Plans are currently underway to have the first shipment of Citrus in March 2023 when the citrus season begins.

**Disclaimer:** ZimTrade strives to compile reliable, research-based information that is passed on to our clients in good faith. Whilst every care has been taken in the production of this report, ZimTrade does not accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied. For more information about ZimTrade and its activities log on to [www.tradetimababwe.com](http://www.tradetimababwe.com)

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