

Better mango harvest indicated for 2016/2017 season

South African mango growers are reporting a better harvest for the 2016/2017 season with greater crop and fruit sizes and improved fruit quality. This compared to the 2015/16 season's crops in which severe hail resulted in a loss of 17% of the total crop. Less disease has been reported this year, resulting in a better quality fruit, higher pack-outs, and increased fruit supply.



Meditations via [pixabay](#)

As with all other local fresh produce sectors over the past year, mango production has been affected by prevailing climatic conditions, including high temperatures and once again, hail. This led to the season beginning around two weeks earlier than expected, with early-season cultivars like the popular Tommy Atkins being ready for harvesting two weeks ahead of schedule.

An oversupply of mangoes

As a result, Tommy Atkins producers in the Hoedspruit and Malelane areas simultaneously harvested greater volumes of fruit, leading to the market coming under pressure, which in some cases has led to an oversupply of mangoes delivered to juice factories.

A decline in orders for dried South African mangoes from international buyers has also exacerbated the oversupply situation. This was possibly due to increased competition from West Africa, Ghana and Burkina Faso, and higher production costs associated with local fruit drying.

Shifts in demand

There has also been a minor shift in demand, with slightly less consumer and retailer demand for mangoes this season to date. However, this is in line with traditional seasonal fluctuations, such as continued pressure on household budgets following the festive season and the start of the new school and work year.

Overall, the fresh produce markets have demonstrated good support for local mangoes, with positive movement on their floors. Growers further expect demand to increase as the season continues and other cultivars make their way onto the market.

The green-skinned Kent and Keitt mangoes, for example, are due to arrive within the next two weeks. Producers have reported a good crop of these mangoes, and anticipate a good supply to market with improved prices.

Building consumer awareness

This encouraging harvest of Kent and Keitt mangoes – which will be available until the end of March – provides an opportunity to further consumer awareness of the use of green-skinned mangoes, which this year will focus on recognising readiness in these mangoes, which become a lighter green when ripe.

Consumers will also be educated around additional uses for these typically larger mangoes as well as the fact that they are sweeter, have excellent flavour and are very versatile in the kitchen.

The best eating mangoes are beginning to come into season now, including less common varieties such as Shelley, Irwin, Haden, and Heidi.

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