



By Tom Joyce

Tuesday 12th December 2017, 16:10 GMT

The Fresh Approach spies opportunities

The Kenyan exporter sees good potential for various products in the US market once direct flights between Nairobi and Atlanta commence



Catherine Muya with managing director David Muya

Kenyan exporter The Fresh Approach is hopeful that the commencement of direct flights between Nairobi and the US city of Atlanta will lead to a major boost in exports to the market over the coming years.

"The US has not really been tapped by African fresh produce companies," says business development director Catherine Muya. "So there is great potential for numerous products, including baby carrots and runner beans."

The opportunity has come about through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides assistance and incentives for African companies sending to the US. "It is a government initiative with Kenya Airlines," says Muya. "It has previously been used for manufactured

goods like jeans, but now we will see the benefits for fresh produce."

The Fresh Approach equally exports French beans, mange tout, sugarsnap peas, avocados and passionfruit. "We sell to Europe," says Muya, "mainly to France. But we are looking at Germany and the Netherlands, maybe also the UK. However, we are waiting to see what will happen with Brexit."

The Middle East remains an established market for the company, even if challenges currently abound. "We send mangoes, avocados, all types of beans and herbs," says Muya. "It is a good market with a very good transit time from Kenya. It's a market that will always be there. Prices are not great, but it is more of a volume market. Guaranteeing payments can be difficult, but that's not a problem that's unique to the Middle East. In Asia, in Europe,

you also need to find the right partner. It is the same in Russia. We have had a lot more enquiries into our range from customers in Russia and Ukraine."

However, one of the biggest challenges facing Kenyan growers right now is climate change. "It's clear," says Muya. "The traditional rainy season is shorter and starts earlier or later than in the past, making growers very conscious about their irrigation systems. We can no longer rely on rainfall. We have a lot of smallscale farmers, who require a lot of education into irrigation techniques in order to use and waste less water. Food waste is also a big issue globally. This culture of accepting only the most perfect fruit has to change."