



By Carl Collen

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# OTC goes for RSA sweet potatoes

## Group works with Pro-Plum Orchards to bring South Africa-grown organic sweet potatoes to Europe and Canada



**D**utch organic fruit and vegetable distributor OTC Organics has teamed up with organic stonefruit and apple specialist Pro-Plum Orchards to bring organic sweet potatoes to markets such as Europe and Canada.

Pro-Plum Orchards, noting the growth of the sweet potato category, asked OTC to conduct market research on the potential for organics, and with demand seemingly high, agreed to work together exclusively.

The group chose to cultivate the Beauregard variety, a popular sweet potato which is favoured for its taste and deep-orange flesh that keeps well in storage.

In week 29 OTC expects the first organic sweet potatoes in the Netherlands for further distribution to Europe and Canada.

"Pro-Plum Orchards and OTC Organics has been working together on certified organic plums and other stonefruit for

more than nine years," said Paul Roos Jr, key account manager at Pro-Plum Orchards. "This year we will supply OTC Organics with certified organic sweet potatoes, the first sweet potato season with OTC Organics of many to come.

"In past years Pro-Plum Orchards did produce and export sweet potatoes for the conventional market but decided to convert the entire business to certified organic, including sweet potatoes," he continued. "For us, it is about the organic mindset and ensuring safe produce to clients, having full focus on building sustainable supply of certified organic products."

Cornelis Ernst, purchase manager at OTC Organics, added: "The organic sweet potatoes from Pro-Plum Orchards are exclusively distributed by OTC Organics, and that is a real honour. We complement each other's strengths in the market and we are very proud to work with these professional producers. This year we are starting with limited volumes, but the expectation is that we will receive more production next year.

Interested buyers can order already and it is also possible to place an order for 2020."

Located in the Waterberg area in the Limpopo province of South Africa, Pro-Plum Orchards, a certified organic producer, is currently managed by the fourth generation of the Roos family.

Pro-Plum Orchards also forms an integral part of OrganoGroup, a group of companies dedicated to producing organic products grown in a sustainable manner.

OrganoGroup is focused on making certified organic products available both locally in South Africa, but also to the export market.