

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Fred Meintjes

Monday 24th June 2019, 14:24 GMT

Mixed Sharon fruit season winds down

The South African Sharon fruit season did not live up to its early promise



The 2019 South African Sharon fruit season is winding down and although there have been many highlights, the season's early promise was not quite fulfilled.

In the end around 2,500 tonnes were exported and around 200 tonnes sold in the local market. The early crop estimations were for 3,500 exported tonnes out of total crop of 5,000 tonnes.

"In celebrating our 21st year in South Africa we did have a solid but not spectacular export programme," said Hein Smal of Mor International in South Africa. "In the local market we saw strong demand and had very successful market days in the north of the country, which suggests a good future for Sharon fruit in South Africa."

While the industry relies

much on export markets, it has also seen major success in local market development programmes over the past decade or so.

"More and more it is a new exotic product that fills a niche in the South African market at the end of the berry season when consumers are looking for new exotic offers," explained Meir Ben-Artzy, chairman of Mor International explained. "Sharon fruit fits this profile because of its inherent sweetness and accepted health-giving qualities."

In terms of exports, the UK and Europe again this year received the bulk of volumes, but according to Ben-Artzy, exciting progress has also been made in the Far East, Middle East and Canada.

"After 21 years we are now consolidated as an industry and with yields

improving we look forward to an exciting future," he said. "We are constantly working with growers to improve their yields and techniques and we expect steady progress in the future."

One of the challenges that the local Sharon fruit industry faces is that it has a relatively short season.

"Every year we start a new game at the beginning of April and conclude our sales by end June or early July. Judging though from the excitement from consumers we encounter every year at the start and throughout our season, there is a good future for our fruit," added Smal.