

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Fred Meintjes

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## Sharon fruit picking begins in RSA



Indications are that the crop could be bigger than last year, with an estimate due in mid-April

**T**he new South African sharon fruit crop is likely to be bigger than that of last year, although the final estimate will only be available in mid-April.

The first fruit was picked at Buffeljagsrivier and Bonnievale in the Southern Cape on 30 March – these regions are the centre of the country's sharon fruit business.

The harvest will last until early May and fruit will be available on the South African market through to July.

Last year around 3,500 tonnes was delivered and packed for the export and local markets. Although still one of the minor fruits in South Africa, the sharon fruit's attractive appearance, sweet taste

and high nutritional value has made it popular amongst consumers.

Hein Smal of Mor International South Africa (MISA) said that while there are a lot of challenges this year, he is confident of it being a good season.

"The reports from the orchards indicate a good quality year," he confirmed. "We experience good demand for our fruit."

While the first fruit won't be exported until the end of next week, the northern regions of South Africa could receive their first volumes from next week onwards.

Sharon fruit has become a mainstay for South African consumers who are looking for different taste experiences during the autumn and

early winter when the fresh produce sector is dominated by commodity fruit lines. It has been particularly successful in the informal trade.

However, the bulk of the fruit is still exported, with up to 200 containers loaded at Buffeljagsrivier and shipped through the port of Cape Town.

Europe is the biggest marketing region and the South African fruit provides an extension to the Northern Hemisphere season. The industry also supply customers in the Middle East, Far East and the Indian Ocean Islands.