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By Fred Meintjes

Tuesday 23rd February 2021, 12:03 GMT

Clive Garrett is new SAAGA chairman

Eastern markets will boost investments in the South African avocado industry, according to newly-elected Garrett



Clive Garrett

Greater access to markets in the East will result in a huge investment into avocados, thereby creating much-needed employment opportunities in South Africa.

That is the view of Clive Garrett, the ZZ2 marketing executive who has been elected as the new chairman of the avocado grower association SAAGA.

Garrett pointed out that South African avocados have built up a good reputation in Europe.

"The service levels extended by our exporters and the relationships we have built up with our receivers in Europe over decades stands South African avocados in good stead for the years ahead," he explained.

"The biggest challenge we have in South Africa is convincing our authorities to open more markets," Garrett confirmed.

"South Africa is ideally placed to serve the eastern markets of India, China and Japan. We can beat our largest competitor – Peru – to market by more than ten days. This makes our logistics cost far less and our product therefore much more competitive."

Eastern promise

It seems that members of the trade in the east are equally keen to see South African avocados entering their countries.

"We receive requests from these markets on a daily basis but due to a lack of market access South Africa is losing out on vital foreign exchange," Garrett noted.

South Africa was close to gaining access to Japan and India in 2020 when Covid derailed the process.

"As we return to a semblance of

normality we will continue to work with our authorities in getting these markets open," he continued. "We are also working very hard to get the US and China open to avocados. In addition we will be looking at retaining and optimising the current markets we have."

Consumption aim

Another challenge, Garrett said, was to raise consumption levels inside South Africa.

"We will continue developing the local market as the per capita consumption in South Africa remains very low compared to Europe and the US," he noted.

"SAAGA will also continue to support our growers with world class research and technical developments while at the same time assisting in developing our emerging farmers."

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Garrett takes over the reins at SAAGA as the South African industry is entering its new season.

The country is expected to export around 16m cartons of avocados this year, compared to the 2020 crop of 15m cartons.

It is officially an off-year,

but because more new orchards are coming into production the export figure is expected to exceed last year's total.

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