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By Mike Knowles

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Mozambique bananas head for South Africa



Joint venture exporter The African Fruit Company says it has sold around half of its production through Desert Sun Trade

Organic bananas from Mozambique are being sold in major volumes on the South African market, according to reports in the east African country citing the Agence Africaine de Presse.

Around 3,000 tonnes of bananas were reportedly shipped from Mozambique's southern province of Gaza by The African Food Company (TAFC), a joint venture project established in 2010 with the backing of the Mozambican and Dutch governments.

That volume, which was marketed in Johannesburg

Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town by South African importer Desert Sun Trade, is said to have earned the group around US\$1m and apparently represents about half of the company's total harvest last year from a planted area of over 300ha.

TAFC's 300ha organic plantation is thought to be the only commercial banana plantation in the area focused on producing premium organic bananas.

Situated approximately 240km north of the capital, Maputo, the plantation draws water from the nearby Limpopo River for irrigation and, according to TAFC itself, has a potential annual banana production capacity of 15,000 tonnes.

According to its chairman and founder Stefan-Erik von Euw, TAFC is backed by "committed Swiss investors" Alden Impact Capital and managed by an experienced team of professionals.

"We go beyond farming, with a great offering of truly premium quality products, targeting long-standing relationships with key clients," he explains. "We are dedicated to responsible and sustainable operations throughout."