

Minister Steenhuisen: Progress Report on Market Access Issues

- 1. EU citrus measures at the WTO (FCM & CBS) – disputes advanced**
 - South Africa moved to WTO panel stage against EU phytosanitary measures on citrus in July 2024; the cases continued under Minister Steenhuisen.
- 2. Market access: table grapes to the Philippines**
 - Market opened on 26 Feb 2025, announced 5 Mar 2025; Minister credited 10-year negotiation and commencement of exports.
- 3. Re-opening/expansion of access in Southeast Asia**
 - Minister reported progress on table grapes to Vietnam, and broader ASEAN gains (Vietnam/Thailand/Philippines) in July to Sept 2025
- 4. Re-opening of South Africa’s fresh apple exports to Thailand (after many years)**
- 5. US tariff shock (30% on South African goods, incl. agriculture) – response & mitigation**
 - Minister’s public stance and actions: urgent diversification, engagement with the US, and tracking export performance.
- 6. Record/strong US export quarters despite tariff headwinds**
 - Department/Minister statements highlighted Q1–Q2 2025 export growth and reiterated priority to resolve tariff talks.
- 7. China protocols – stone fruit access**
 - **15 Oct 2025:** Minister signed a landmark protocol with China opening the market to five stone fruit categories (apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, prunes).
- 8. Wider market-access portfolio (Minister’s July 2025 briefing)**
 - Minister listed wins: avocados to China; maize to Japan & India; grapes to the Philippines & Vietnam; and rapid resolution of Botswana’s temporary grain ban

9. Draft Export Regulations (standards & facilitation framework)

- Minister invited public comment on Draft Export Regulations (R.6665) in Sept 2025, linked to export enablement/standards

10. Wine exports to Japan

- Minister formally submitted a proposal to Japan's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, H.E. Shinjirō Koizumi, requesting expanded tariff preferences under Japan's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). This is South Africa's first targeted tariff-reduction request to Japan in the wine sector since 1995, when SA became a GSP beneficiary and aligns directly with the Minister's broader Asia-diversification strategy.

11. Push-back against EU export bullying

- Minister met with EU Ambassador regarding EU citrus trade, showing his firm diplomatic stance against EU protectionism and "regulatory bullying."

No.	Date	Issue / Market Access / Tariff Focus	Description & Minister's Response	Implication for Agriculture & Trade
1	Oct 2024	The export of South African avocados to new markets, particularly China.	Minister's efforts have been linked to the first shipment of 21 tonnes of South African avocados from Westfalia Fruit in Shanghai on 8 October 2024	Minister Steenhuisen has been actively involved in advocating for and celebrating the export of South African avocados to new markets, particularly China. He has highlighted South Africa's logistical advantages, such as shorter shipping times to China, and the importance of opening new export channels for the agricultural sector's growth.
2	04 Feb 2025	Fresh apple exports to Thailand	South Africa regained market access for fresh apples to the Kingdom of Thailand after years of suspension. The Minister announced the reopening as part of efforts to diversify export markets.	Reopens an important horticultural market; supports diversification of South Africa's fruit exports and mitigates EU market concentration risks.
3	21 Apr 2025	G20 Agriculture Working Group hosted by SA – market access and food security priorities	Minister Steenhuisen hosted the G20 Agriculture Working Group and committed to promoting inclusive market participation, technology transfer, and new market access opportunities for African producers.	Strengthens South Africa's multilateral leadership and aligns with CAADP and AfCFTA priorities.

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4	18 Aug 2025	US tariffs (30%) on South African agricultural exports	Minister noted that despite new US tariffs, agricultural exports to the US rose 26% in Q2 2025 (to US\$161 million). He emphasised engagement with Washington and diversification to mitigate risks.	Maintains exporter confidence and strengthens negotiation posture under AGOA talks.
5	12–13 Aug 2025	Government strategy to combat US tariffs	Minister announced a five-pronged mitigation plan, including revising South Africa's trade offer to the US, seeking tariff relief, and accelerating diversification towards Asia and the Middle East.	Demonstrates proactive response to tariff shocks and supports national export resilience.
6	15 Oct 2025	Stone fruit trade protocol with China	Minister signed a landmark protocol with China opening the market to five stone fruit types (apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, prunes).	Adds major new high-value export market for horticulture, supporting thousands of jobs in the Western Cape.
7	12 Sept 2025	Bilateral phytosanitary agreements for avocados (India), beef (Middle East), maize (Japan)	Minister reported progress on new bilateral protocols: avocados to India, beef to Iran and Gulf states, and maize to Japan.	Expands South Africa's market footprint across Asia and the Middle East, improving export diversification.

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8	11 Sept 2025	Tariff preferences for South African wine exports to Japan	Minister Steenhuisen submitted a proposal to Japan's MAFF Minister, H.E. Shinjirō Koizumi, requesting expanded tariff preferences for South African wine under Japan's GSP. The request included elimination or reduction of duties on sparkling and still wine categories and addition of new tariff lines to the GSP list, citing WTO compliance and inclusive growth benefits.	Would enhance competitiveness of SA wine in Japan, expand export share, and promote transformation in the wine sector through black-owned brands under the Wine Arc and WIETA certification.

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9	Sep-25	EU Cold-Treatment & Phytosanitary Measures on Citrus	<p>Minister Steenhuisen reaffirmed South Africa's position against the EU's disproportionate and protectionist phytosanitary regime, particularly the 2022 cold-treatment requirement for False Codling Moth (FCM) and restrictions linked to Citrus Black Spot (CBS). He directed officials to intensify diplomatic and technical engagements through the EU-SADC EPA SPS Committee and the WTO SPS Committee, arguing that the EU's measures are not science-based and breach international norms. The Minister emphasised that South Africa's non-compliance rate is below 0.03% (5 CBS interceptions out of 40 000+ containers inspected), far below the EU's closure threshold of 35 cases. He instructed that the EU's inconsistent Member-State declarations be raised as evidence of asymmetry, calling for "science-based, fair, and sustainable trade."</p>	<p>Positions South Africa as a defender of science-based trade rules and reinforces national credibility in WTO and EPA forums. Strengthens government narrative of resisting EU protectionism while pursuing diversification into Asia and Middle East markets.</p>