

Industry

SA seeks agriculture boost in post-Brexit trade deal

U.K. doesn't share sensitivities of some EU countries, Davies says.

Kevin Crowley, Bloomberg / 25 January 2017 09:07



Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies

South Africa sees opportunities to sell more of its agricultural produce to the UK under a post-Brexit trade agreement, Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies said.

"The UK doesn't have the sensitivities of some of the countries from southern Europe that see us as competitors," Davies said, referring to wine and fruit. "In the longer and medium term it may well be that we can improve our access into the UK market for those products."

Davies, who spoke in an interview on Tuesday, is in the UK for talks to ensure that trade isn't interrupted when the country leaves the European Union. The Economic Partnership Agreement, signed last year between the EU and the five-nation Southern African Customs Union, will form a template for new UK-South Africa trading rules, Davies said.

Exports of South African citrus to the EU have been periodically blocked in recent years due to objections from farm groups in Spain, which competes with South Africa as a producer of the fruits, who said they were concerned about the possibility of black-spot disease from South Africa infecting their trees.

South Africa and Spain are major suppliers of oranges and other citrus fruit globally and the African country is the world's seventh-biggest wine producer.

The bulk of the EPA will remain in place but the countries will have to renegotiate quotas for some products before the Brexit process is complete, Davies said. "There's nothing that's going to require a huge amount of negotiating effort on both sides."

The Southern African Customs Union consists of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland.

© 2017 Bloomberg

