

Mangoes: Early Tommy Atkins peak saturates market

South Africa's mango export season isn't running on all cylinders yet, as Tommy Atkins makes up the bulk of the harvest at the moment and more's the pity, as two regions whose harvests normally are sequential, came in simultaneously this year, causing an early Tommy Atkins peak.



Meditations via [pixabay](#)

Usually, Malelane's mangoes are earlier than those from Hoedspruit. But this year both arrived at the same time, causing oversupply on the market.

Mangoes are for the moment mostly exported to the Middle East and Russia, where growth in both markets is expected, with a sprinkling to the EU and India. Prices on the export markets are "liveable", says one exporter. "In dollar terms, prices are the same as last year, but with the strengthened rand, the price back on the farm isn't wonderful."

At one fresh produce market, an agent says that the market moves so slowly that there are still significant mango volumes left from before Christmas. "However, I got some fresh mangoes in today which sold for very good prices."

Expectations of a normalisation

With high temperatures in the north of the country, producers have no choice but to pick mangoes as fast as they can. Substantial rain a few weeks ago resulted in anthracnose in some areas. Expectations are that as Tommy Atkins finishes up, and other cultivars start, the situation will normalise in about two to three weeks' time.

Tommy Atkins is the main cultivar for the Malelane production area, where the harvest is pretty much packed. Hoedspruit specialises in Keitts, a cultivar with a long window of almost two months. Tzaneen has just started picking its Tommy Atkins.

As for South African mangoes being in an off cycle, there's not much evidence of that for the moment with all the Tommy Atkins around, but overall volumes could be down by 30% to 40%.

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