

Agriculture Minister Steenhuisen discusses citrus import ban with Botswana and Namibia

John Steenhuisen, South Africa's Agriculture Minister, announced plans to engage with Botswana and Namibia to discuss the citrus import ban and seek a resolution. Namibia's restriction spans from 2021 to 2025, while Botswana's ban extends from June to August, aiming to bolster local agriculture.

During the Agri Limpopo congress in Modimolle, Limpopo, Steenhuisen expressed his belief in the possibility of reaching a mutual agreement without resorting to border closures. He highlighted the importance of dialogue to avoid escalating trade tensions, referencing the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) agreement that advocates for open borders and industry cooperation.

"We believe we can find an amicable solution, I don't think we need to end up with a situation where you block our products, and we block yours. I don't think it's helpful to both countries. I hope we will really be able to sit around with the Botswana and Namibia (counterparts) and we two can compromise – we have an agreement in SACU. The agreement is very clear: you cannot just temporarily close borders or shut down industry, now we obviously want to hear Botswana and Namibia's position on the matter, but I don't think it can be escalating to trade war," Steenhuisen stated.

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