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# China a potential market for South African avos as other markets mull import bans

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## WRITER

The South African avocado market faces the threat of a possible ban in future, particularly in the UK, which is reportedly getting rid of avocados on ethical grounds, says economist **Gilberto Biacuana**.

The UK is the second most important market for South Africa's avocado exports, which means that a reduction in demand for avocados in the UK would have a negative impact on South Africa's avocado industry.

The potential ban is being considered amid claims that the water-intensive subtropical fruit is harming farmers and land in regions such as South America, where the fruit is commercially grown. However, at this stage, it is still unclear how other markets in the European Union (EU) will react to the environment concerns around avocado production globally.

Data from the International Trade Centre (ITC) indicates that, in 2017, South Africa exported 43 492 t of avocados to the value of R853-million. Some of the major importers of South Africa's avocados in 2017 included the Netherlands (68.6%), the UK (21.8%), Spain (4.3%) and Namibia (1.2%).

However, should a demand shock in the EU indeed be on the cards for South Africa's exports, Biacuana believes South Africa could potentially take advantage of its participation in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa grouping to negotiate market access to China.

According to reports, China's demand for avocados has been increasing steadily in the last few years, which has further been fueled by the rising middle class and changing dietary patterns, he added. South Africa is the biggest producer of avocados in Africa and the twelfth-largest global producer of the fruit. Avocados are a subtropical fruit and are grown mostly in Limpopo,

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