



20 January 2023

Dear Derek and team at SAAGA,

As the avocado community prepares to gather in New Zealand for the 10th World Avocado Congress (WAC), Westfalia Fruit would like to take this opportunity to pledge its support to the South African Avocado Growers' Association (SAAGA) as the esteemed local industry body finalises its bid to host the WAC in 2027.

Since the first WAC was held in South Africa in 1987, the global avocado industry has enjoyed immense growth. That groundbreaking congress laid the foundations for international collaboration beyond the academic circles being established across the avocado-growing regions of the world. These ties have helped strengthen the global avocado industry, not only through the sharing of technical knowledge and expertise that make production more profitable, but also by enabling consumers to access the fruit 12 months of the year. Thanks to the consistent and constructive communication established between countries, fruit volumes have been appropriately balanced and pests and diseases have been pro-actively monitored and in many cases managed. The WAC has proven itself a key platform for the exchange of both scientific knowledge and market trade.

Why South Africa for 2027?

We feel there is ample justification for awarding South Africa the coveted role of WAC host:

- With most of the other large commercial avocado-producing countries having now had an opportunity to host the coveted event, it would be appropriate and even symbolic for South Africa to host the WAC again after a 40-year hiatus.
- As our local industry matures from supplying an exotic product to delivering a fruit that forms part of many consumers' daily basket, we recognise the importance of bringing the congress back to Mzansi and are confident that the country, via SAAGA, is ideally positioned to successfully host the event in 2027.
- As one of the older avocado origins, the South African avocado industry has always punched way above its weight, particularly in terms of scientific innovation. It is the origin of some of the world's leading R&D that has benefited the global industry enormously over the decades.
- South Africa also has one of the most developed clonal avocado nursery industries in the world, supporting a trend that the industry is slowly embracing. Clonal trees and rootstocks from South Africa find their way across the globe to new frontiers – a case in point being Dusa, proudly developed in South Africa and the dominant rootstock for over 90% of clonal trees produced globally. Congress participants would be welcome to see how Westfalia has built on this success and developed further rootstocks (Leola and Zerala) in collaboration with our partners. It is this kind of collaboration that brings new techniques to the industry to keep progressing avocado developments for all parties across the supply chain. As Westfalia partners with SAAGA on rootstocks in South Africa, this topic could potentially form part of the scientific agenda for WAC 2027.
- The local avocado industry has also evolved to establish plantings in diverse climatic contexts, which in turn enables year-round production. This feature would help set South Africa apart as a host, enabling congress participants to visit similar and/or contrasting production areas to those in their home country.



- South Africa is the gateway to Southern and Central East Africa and has played a key role in the development of avocado industries in other African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Southern Africa's geographical positioning makes it pivotal in the development of the Asian avocado markets, which are likely to have a significant role in the future of the global avocado industry.
- In addition to its world-class exports, South Africa has developed a very strong domestic market with the support of sophisticated retailers. This has led to a high per-capita consumption, which many new avocado-growing countries aspire to and would want to emulate.
- Other exciting developments in the avocado market and well supported by South African innovation include whole crop utilisation, as in the production of oil, guacamole, IQF pieces and novel value-added formulations. The local retail market has been developed to utilise the nutrient-dense fruit in a wide range of consumer goods, which would be of interest to many congress delegates.
- With an ever-growing focus in the industry and across the globe, sustainability must be a key item on the WAC agenda and South Africa is well placed to demonstrate its progress in areas ranging from responsible water management and biodiversity support to delivering novel cultivars and technologies that can enable industry players to better withstand the numerous impacts of a changing climate.

Westfalia as a trusted ally

Given our own South African heritage, our truly diversified global avocado footprint, and our commitment to sustainability that resides in our DNA, Westfalia Fruit is a proud supporter of SAAGA's bid to host the WAC 2027, and would be delighted to see South Africa play an integral role in the further development of the global industry. As has been the case with all previous WAC events, our teams of Avocado Experts would warmly welcome the opportunity to share the Group's knowledge and experience in myriad fields to help secure a sustainable future for our beautiful industry.

Our well-established South African footprint also positions Westfalia Fruit well to host conference delegates at our numerous avocado operations across the country, as did our local presence in Colombia for the highly successful WAC 2019. Should you ever need to call on them, our talented Westfalians are at your disposal to help with any aspect of congress planning, preparation and execution, should South Africa win the bid, and we are committed to financially supporting the congress via title sponsorship or similar avenue proposed by the SAAGA committee.

Wishing you much success in the bidding process, and reiterating our conviction that South Africa can indeed serve as a world-class venue for the next World Avocado Congress.

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alk Brand', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alk Brand
CEO, Westfalia Fruit Group