

# FIRST-EVER LOCAL LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL BLUEBERRY PROJECT BEARS FRUIT ABUNDANTLY

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Headlines



According to Willem Mostert, Namibian manager of Cherry Irrigation, whose team designed and implemented the fully automated drip irrigation and 'fertigation' management system for the landmark project, the quality of the fruit harvested has so far been exceptional.

"A few years ago, no one would have dreamed that you could grow high-quality blueberries in a country as dry as this, said Mostert. "We're proving what's possible with the right planning, infrastructure and management in place."

The blueberrie project supports the investment strategy of selecting high value crops for export to earn foreign currency. The bulk of the harvest is for export with 5% reserved for local consumption. To date, 500 kg of blueberries are being sold in Checkers supermarkets nationwide.



The project has also turned out to be a significant seasonal employers since all the fruit has to be harvested by hand. Here, Mitrud Shirongo (left) and Ester Marungu from Mashare village, are picking the first fruits that have recently begun to ripen.

"GIPF is determined to fund agribusiness to achieve food security; import substitution and export gains of earning foreign currency, to help bolster national reserves. It is against this

they should be a part of one's daily dietary consumption. Go out there and buy local produce," continued Mezui-Engo.

Project director Albert Basson Jnr said the 2020 harvest will continue to late October. "We're projecting a yield of up to 150 tonnes, as different varieties reach maturity. Currently, three varieties imported from the US grower, Fall Creek have been planted on the property. The plantings were established in November 2019, with 16 ha under net, 2 ha in tunnels and 2 ha of open field."

It is envisaged that the mature project will cultivate blueberries on between 200 and 300 hectares. Mashare also produces an assortment of cereals and vegetables.



Chief Executive of the Government Institutions Pension Fund, Mr David Nuyoma, with a packet of the first harvest of Namibian blueberries, currently on sale in Checkers supermarkets.

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