

First- ever local large-scale commercial blueberry project bears fruit

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The first large-scale local commercial blueberry produced by the Mashare Berries project, which forms part of the Spitz Capital Fund anchored in the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) unlisted investment programme is set to produce a bumper harvest.

The project is situated 50km's east of Rundu on the banks of the Kavango river and according to the GIPF, Mashare aims to harvest an estimated 150 tons of blueberries between July and October.

The blueberries support 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, 500kg's of

< blueberries are being sold in Checkers shops nation-wide.

"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 background that the Fund took a conscious and calculated decision to invest in agribusiness such as Mashare, to deliver returns for our members, while at the same time creating employment and empowering our rural communities. Mashare also produces cash crops such as maize, wheat, potatoes." said Sara Mezui-Engo; Manager: Alternative Investments.

Blue berries have several health benefits such as; being an excellent source of vitamin C, soluble fibre, which aids digestion. It also reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, improves vision and nurtures a glowing skin.

"Given the immune boosting properties that blueberries provide, it goes without saying that they should be a part of one's daily dietary consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Go out there and buy local produce." concluded Mezui-Engo.