The Indonesian Quarantine Agency has given 'Country of Recognition' status for South Africa's food safety control system, in a move that is expected to simplify what has to date been a cumbersome export permission process.

In a release, industry group Hortgro hailed the move saying it would increase the export potential of South Africa's deciduous fruit.

The list of products in the list includes apples, apricots, cherries, citrus fruits, grapes, grapefruit, lemons, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pears, peanuts, plums, pomelos and prunes.

The document was signed by Indonesian Minister of Agriculture Amran Sulaiman on April 11, and forwarded to Political Counsellor Willem Geerlings from the South African Embassy in Jakarta.

"This has been a long and complex process and the industry is heartened by this break-through," Hortgro executive director Anton Rabe said in a release.

"This establishes a new trading regime that will ease the import process and documentation requirements, and also opens up the port of Jakarta as entry point into Indonesia.

"We wish to thank all officials - especially at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) - both in South Africa and at the Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, for the successful conclusion of the country of recognition status that has been achieved."

Rabe highlighted the result came from a team effort and would "greatly assist with creating a more stable trading regime" to grow South Africa's Indonesia-bound exports.

Indonesia's non-tariff barriers against food imports have drawn the ire of exporting nations for years now, prompting a call for action to the World Trade Organization (WTO) from the governments of the U.S. and New Zealand.

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