

MACADAMIAS

Possible world record for sound kernel recovery

A KwaZulu-Natal South Coast macadamia farm may have achieved a new world record for sound kernel recovery (SKR). While still to be confirmed internationally, the South African macadamia industry said Kaiser Farm's 50,4% average in SKR for nuts delivered to Mayo Macs' processing factory in Paddock was a "really excellent" achievement.

Father-and-son farming team Dave and Richard Mattison of Kaiser Farm on the KZN South Coast produced the 2,37t of macadamia nuts being considered for the record.

"The 50,4% SKR was achieved on a mature orchard of cultivar '816' which, in a normal year, averages around 35% to 38% on the South Coast," a statement from Mayo Macs said.

The Mattisons used a strict fertiliser and pest management programme, regularly pruned their macadamia trees to take advantage of sunlight, and often consulted macadamia production experts for the best production advice, according to the statement.

It is estimated that in 2015 South Africa's macadamia

industry would produce about 46 000t of nuts, worth an estimated R2 billion. Mayo Macs CEO, PJ Venter, said the country's main macadamia markets were China, Europe and the US.

"The average SKR for KZN is in the region of 34%. Kernel defects are caused by factors such as stink bug damage. A SKR of 50,4% is really excellent as the shells of the nuts would have to be thin in addition to having very low levels of kernel defects," said Derek Donkin, CEO of the SA Subtropical Growers' Association, the umbrella body for the Southern African Macadamia Growers' Association.

The International Nut and Dried Fruit Council estimated that in 2015 the SA macadamia industry's production would be the highest in the world at 46 950t nut-in-shell. Australia had the second-highest production figures at about 43 834t.

A 50% SKR rate had never before been achieved in South Africa or globally, according to Mayo Macs KZN extension officer, Andrew Sheard. – *Lloyd Phillips*

BELOW: Father-and-son team Dave and Richard Mattison of Kaiser Farm on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast may have produced a world record delivery of sound macadamia kernels.

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