

Zimbabwe bans fruit, vegetable imports to save scarce forex

HARARE, Zimbabwe - Zimbabwe has banned the importation of fruit and vegetables to save scarce foreign currency in the face of a worsening economic crisis, state media reported on Tuesday.



prasanna_devadas via [pixabay](#)

Agriculture Minister Joseph Made told The Herald that President Robert Mugabe had directed that the importation of horticultural products be stopped "as they waste much-needed foreign currency".

"This means that the importation of fruit and vegetables will be stopped immediately."

"The foreign currency being wasted on the importation of carrots and grapes will now be utilised towards the purchase of more fertilisers and pesticides," he said.

Running out

Zimbabwe in 2009 abandoned its own currency in favour of the US dollar due to hyperinflation. But it started running out of those dollars and last year it introduced "bond notes", a parallel currency pegged to the US dollar. The bond notes themselves are running short, forcing banks to ration cash withdrawals.

The government has blamed clandestine dealers running the black market for the shortages of cash and basic commodities.

The country has in recent months experienced basic foodstuffs and sporadic petrol and diesel shortages.

Country will have to rely on local farmers

The minister did not state how long the ban would last. But for now, the country will have to rely on local farmers to produce the vegetables and fruits, he said.

Zimbabwe was once a net food exporter but has been battling to produce enough over the years since

Mugabe parcelled large high-production white-owned farms to landless blacks in 2000.

Source: AFP

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