

Competitive horizons

South Africa hopes Brexit will see more agricultural products exported to UK

According to a report published by www.iol.co.za, South Africa is intending to strike up a trade agreement with the UK for certain agricultural products in the wake of Brexit. In particular, the country's Trade and Industry Ministry sees opportunities to target the UK market with fruit and wine. South Africa is currently the seventh-biggest wine producer in the world and is also one of the main suppliers of citrus fruits. However, growing competition between South Africa and nations in the south of Europe has meant that exporting these fruits to parts of the European Union has become more challenging in recent times. The report contends that the UK does not similarly regard South Africa as a direct competitor, thus making it an even more attractive market for fruit and wine producers.

Plastics industry in Brazil set to begin revival in 2017

Trade and industry bodies in Brazil expect a slight rise in plastics production during 2017. Different associations predict growth of between 1.3 and 2.0 per cent in a year where stability is set to be the main characteristic in the sector. This will set a platform for more consistent and robust growth during 2018, a report published by www.plasticsnewseurope.com points out. Stability will also help producers to replenish stocks that became significantly depleted last year. Companies will be helped by growth in consumption in 2017, with the report anticipating a 1.8 per cent increase. An expected 25 per cent rise in demand for machinery among plastics processors in Brazil is another industry positive. In the longer term, new opportunities may arise as a result of plans by the USA to increase protectionism.

Emerging markets to drive growth for Chinese automakers

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (CAAM) believes that 2017 could see car exports rise by 5 per cent, with total volume reaching 750,000 vehicles. Greater competitiveness of Chinese auto brands is cited as a major factor by the industry body. This sentiment especially applies to the SUV segment, CAAM claims. Favorable political relations mean that emerging markets are seen as major growth drivers for carmakers in China. The report, as published by www.chinadaily.com, points out that this has given rise to trade opportunities within the fast-growing markets of India and South Asia. Automakers are likewise alert to the potential that exists within emerging markets in the North African and Middle Eastern regions. Chinese-made vehicles are seen as ideal for developing nations because of their ability to meet local requirements with regards to parts, materials, emission levels and performance.

Determining the best time to start a business

Running a business involves considerable demands, so you must have time to give it proper attention. The degree of focus needed means that it would be unwise to consider starting a business venture at a time when your life is already stressful. It would make more sense to wait until things settle down again, so you are better prepared for challenges ahead. According to an article published by www.thebalance.com, would-be entrepreneurs also need to consider other factors before making a decision to start their own business. For instance, having appropriate personal qualities is a must. Succeeding in business demands high levels of self-motivation and organization, as well as a range of management skills. And what about your financial circumstances? Do you have access to the funds that new businesses typically require at the outset when leases have to be paid and equipment purchased? You also have to decide how much risk you are prepared to take. Some impact on your family is inevitable too. Commitment to your business means less family time, and the inherent anxieties and uncertainties place even more strain on relationships. One suggestion is to involve family members in your business, not least because this can bring tax advantages and other benefits.