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# SAfrica, Libya farm deal awaits agreement

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By Muchena Zigomo

SOMERSET WEST, South Africa (Reuters) - A new land deal allowing South African farmers to produce livestock, milk and fruit in Libya has been put on hold pending the finalisation of an investment protection agreement between the two countries.

Theo de Jager, Deputy President of South Africa's largest farmers' union Agri SA said a protection agreement between the two countries had been drafted.

"We were happy with the opportunities we were offered in Libya, but the problem now is that the investment protection agreement between the South African and Libyan governments has not been ratified, so we are not fully protected if we go there," Theo de Jager, Deputy President of farmers union Agri SA said on Thursday.

He said Libya had offered South African farmers a number of agricultural opportunities, including a 40,000 hectare olive farm and a large fully equipped dairy farm with about 3,600 dairy cattle. Countries are offering the opportunities in return for investment and farming expertise.

"The infrastructure is in place, but perhaps because of a lack of know-how in farming they haven't been able to utilise and make those ventures profitable," De Jager told Reuters on the sidelines of an agriculture conference.

South African farmers have attracted widespread interest across the continent as other countries try to tap into their expertise to boost food production and ensure food security.

Africa's biggest economy also has one of the continent's best-developed agriculture sectors and is a top producer of maize, wheat and livestock.

"We're talking to people in Sudan, Sierra Leone, Malawi and there's also quite a lot of interest from Angola at the moment but any plans to go to those countries will primarily take into account the existence of (investment) protection agreements," De Jager said. [Continued...](#)

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