

The macadamia and avocado industries lost US\$11.2m and \$1.7m respectively from stolen goods last year, reports South Africa's [Farmer's Weekly](#).

Increasing popularity and profitability of the two products has been both rewarding and created difficulties for farmers. As incidents of theft have gone rampant in recent years, farmers don't know how to respond.

"We find that the thieves move from region to region to target farms with less security," avocado farmer Edrean Ernst was quoted saying. So, the industry sees security measures as critical.

Ernst is the area director of the South African Avocado Grower's association in Letaba. He explained that security has ramped up in recent seasons as a result of thefts.

"The theft mostly takes place at the beginning and end of the season," quotes Farmer's Weekly.

Activity in avocado farms during high season is probably a deterrent for thieves. Often, thieves take immature avocados.

Further, "efforts to police immature fruit on the market also helps to keep stolen fruit from being sold," said Ernst.

So, Ernst urged farmers to report incidents of theft so that the industry can establish trends.

Macadamia nuts

CEO of Macadamias South Africa Lizel Pretorius told the newspaper about ongoing investigations into theft.

"Crime that starts at the farm gate travels all the way up the value chain, aiding a broader crim industry," the newspaper quoted Pretorius.

"There is also a further ripple effect as the loss of income impacts job opportunities and government's tax income."

Storing and moving the stolen goods is easier when you have a product like macadamia nuts, she noted. Since people can store macadamia nuts for long periods, it makes it easier.

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