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US Tariffs Drive 17% Price Surge for South African Wine in American Market

South African wine imports to the US plunge as higher duties erode competitiveness and force producers to rethink export strategies.

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Tariffs imposed by the United States on South African agricultural products have led to a sharp increase in the price of South African wine in the American market, according to a recent report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The

report, released in February, shows that South African wine is now about 17% more expensive in the US compared to other imported wines, when measured against 2024 prices.

The US has placed duties of up to 30% on certain South African agricultural goods, including wine and fruit. These tariffs have made South African products less competitive in the world’s largest wine market. As a result, imports of South African wine into the US dropped by 11% during the third quarter of last year and fell further by 39% in the final three months of the year.

The UN body’s analysis points out that these tariffs are affecting South Africa’s ability to compete in the US market by shifting competitiveness among countries and sectors in complex ways. The report notes that the impact varies depending on the sector, country, and export structure involved.

South African wine producers are feeling the pressure as their products become less attractive to American buyers due to higher prices. The report suggests that countries facing such trade barriers should closely monitor their tariff positions, look for new export markets when access becomes restricted, and take advantage of opportunities where they have preferential trade margins.

The US remains a key destination for South African wine exports, but these recent trade measures are forcing producers to reconsider their strategies. The UN agency’s findings highlight ongoing challenges for exporters navigating changing global trade policies and emphasize the need for flexibility in response to shifting market conditions.