

Moscow Flower Exhibition. 27-30 August 2013

This is a general horticultural exhibition, not specifically a cut flower show. For the first time this year, cut flowers are incorporated in the show through HPP Holland in conjunction with the IPM show organisers. The show is mainly visited by the general public and the SAFEC stand created a lot of interest and lots of photos were taken. The main questions from the public were where they can buy these flowers in Moscow. The people do not see these flowers in the flower shops. This means that there is scope and additional sales can be attained. Our stand was visited by the South African ambassador who has his office in Moscow as well as the economic and the agricultural section from the embassy. SAFEC appreciates the interest shown by the SA government's officials at this show. From a business point of view we have received a number of enquiries for our products and we list the contact names below.

The governments of Kenya and Ethiopia both had large stands manned by individual flower growers and exporters. We must look at the same type of structure for future shows. The Danish growers also had a large stand manned by individual companies. Each company had only a square meter on which they could exhibit their products. It seemed to work quite well. The Danish government is the main sponsor of the stands with the exhibitors sharing a small part of the costs. Although the SAFEC stand was beautiful, my personal opinion is that we have to involve more companies to take part. The economic office of the SA embassy in Russia agrees with this standpoint and is willing to assist us there. We also had the services of a very capable interpreter which is a necessity at an exhibition in Russia.

In my opinion we must continue exhibiting in Moscow and we have to decide which exhibition to use, either the IPM/HPP combination the International Moscow show grounds or the Crocus venue. Russia will be a very important market for SA flowers. The Russian importers whom we met are very keen to import direct and not through Holland. They reckon it will save costs as well as getting a fresher product. The possibility of shipping Proteas by ship to St. Petersburg needs to be investigated. Fruit is already shipped from Cape Town to St. Petersburg by Balkan Shipping Line, I was told. So why not flowers. The voyage takes 18 to 20 days, but there may be delays in clearing containers. This has to be investigated.

To sum up, the presence of South Africa with its indigenous flowers was well worth the effort and needs to be continued.

Jac Duif. On behalf of the South African Flower Export Council.

List of potential customers attached.