

## Chilean nectarines finally get green light for exports to China

Chilean nectarine shippers have finally got the go-ahead to begin exports to China, despite market access being announced in October.

A delay in the final inspection visit from China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) meant exporters had to wait longer than planned for the inaugural consignment.

Exporters had previously expressed concern that if the visit was delayed too long, they would not be able to ship any fruit until the next season.

Agriculture Minister Carlos Furche announced the latest development on Saturday (Feb. 4) during a visit to the Los Nobles packing plant in the O'Higgins region.

"This is a long-standing aspiration of the Chilean fruit sector," Furche said.

"China will be a very important destination for our nectarines and this achievement is a joint effort between SAG [the Agricultural and Livestock Service] and the Chinese authorities, which must be given great recognition."

Chilean Fruit Exports Association general manager Miguel Canala-Echeverría estimated half of Chile's 7 million boxes of nectarines it exports annually will go to China next season, with white-fleshed varieties representing the majority of volumes.

He said the value of these exports would likely be around US\$55 million.

"Another important aspect to bear in mind is that the Chinese market opening will allow for a better distribution of this fruit in different markets, generating better global returns," he said.

Asoex estimates around 300,000 boxes will be shipped to China in the remainder of this season.

Speaking to Fresh Fruit Portal, Los Nobles plant manager Christian Fuller said the development was "excellent news", explaining that the opening would greatly benefit the industry by taking the pressure off some of the other markets.

He said the Arctic Mist variety was due to be harvested in the next couple of days and may well be sent to China on the weekend.

The export protocols were signed in Chile in November by Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the final delegation visited the country in January.

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