

China is expected to replace the US as the main destination of Chilean nectarines

In February of last year, the Chinese market was opened for Chilean nectarines. The opening of the Asian giant meant an important change for local exporters in terms of distribution, due to that destination's great purchase potential. At that time it was difficult to anticipate how serious the impact would be in the 2017-2018 season. However, exporters are already noticing the consequences.

According to data from Odepa, between January and November of last year shipments to China exceeded three thousand tons of fresh nectarines, an amount that exceeded by more than 28 times the 109 tons shipped to that market in the same period of 2016.

The Minister of Agriculture, Carlos Furche, said: "This season, China is going to become the main destination market for this fruit. Its opening occurred in the final part of the last season of nectarines; so it wasn't very noticeable." "This year the change will be very noticeable and it will have a positive impact on prices," he added. "Before the opening of China, the United States was the main market for Chilean nectarines and there was little competition from other destinations. Now that the Chinese market is open, there will be a better distribution of the Chilean offer and, in addition, a better price level," he stated.

Meanwhile, the president of the Association of Fruit Exporters (Asoex), Ronald Bown, said that the fruit had been very well received by Chinese consumers and that it had achieved a commercial behavior that was far better than in other market alternatives. "Chile sends about seven million boxes of nectarines to the world, and we estimate that we will ship nearly 50% of it to China this season (80% of the white pulp varieties and 30% of the yellow pulp varieties), i.e. a total of 3.5 million boxes at an estimated value of US \$ 55 million FOB," he said.

The president of the Federation of Fruit Producers, Luis Schmidt, stated that the Chinese market had always had an enormous potential for Chilean fruit, and, in this case, he said, it is an excellent alternative for white pulp nectarines.

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