

New maturity parameters for the Chilean kiwi

The Association of Fruit Exporters of Chile AG (ASOEX), together with the Kiwi Committee, presented the new parameters of maturity defined and agreed by the industry to improve the quality and competitiveness of the Chilean kiwi in a more demanding world scenario.

The information was presented in the framework of the Kiwi Regional Seminar, which was held in the city of Curico, the heart of Chile's kiwi production.

"It is important to be in an activity as relevant as this one, 9 years after this Committee was created, to talk about the future of kiwi. A future in which there is a consensus about the importance of the fruit's quality and consistency, as this builds consumer trust. This is what we're looking to build with the new parameters, which were decided by the Kiwi Committee and endorsed by the Board of the Association of Fruit Exporters of Chile," said Ronald Bown, the President of ASOEX.

The Chairman of the Kiwi Committee, Carlos Cruzat, stated: "Consensus has been reached on the need to act and make changes, as they are essential to make the leap that this sector requires to improve its quality and competitiveness in an international scenario where there is a greater volume of kiwis, new competitors, an increase in the global quality of kiwi, new varieties, and new market opportunities, like in China, where consumers demand a sweeter flavor."

Cruzat said that the changes are not only related to modifying the ripeness parameters of the fruit, but also to improving the production, export, and post-harvest processes.

New parameters

Marcela Basualdo, the Technical Head of the Kiwi Committee, explained the parameters established by the industry for this 2018 season. Basualdo started by talking about the parameters of liberation up until the 2017 season, so that the participants could perceive the changes that will be implemented this season and in a two year-period, so that they can all reach a Soluble Solids (SS) average of 6.2% and a Dry Matter (DM) average of 16%.

She made two important observations, which allow verifying the national industry's SS and DM potential; and how these new parameters are achievable by the sector. "Currently, the largest volume of releases occurs between week 8 to 13, however, the highest levels are achieved between week 14 and week 19. That is to say, we are wasting the potential level of SS, losing maturity that is reached at

about 7° Brix. In terms of dry matter, based on information from the last three seasons, we can see that we achieve an average that is above 16%, which means that we have a greater release potential for the PAM."

Regarding the parameters defined for 2018, Basualdo said: "This season we will start asking for an average of 5.8° Brix in Solubles Solids (SS) and no fruit can be under 5.0° Brix. The average of the fruit's dry matter will be 16%, and no fruit can be under 14.5%, with a tolerance of 2 fruits with a minimum of up to 13.5%."

The units of maturity that do not meet the 16% of dry matter should wait until they reach a 6.5° Brix average, no more than 10% of the fruit should be under 5,8° Brix, and there should be no fruit with a DM lower than 13.5%, she added.

Basualdo also said that the compliance parameters of the PAM that will be requested for the Maturity Units (UM) located in communes with early potential would be different. "For these areas we will request an average of 5.5° Brix, and no fruit under 4.8° Brix. The average of the fruit's dry matter will be 15.5%, and no fruit can be under 14.5%, with a tolerance of 2 fruits with a minimum of up to 13.5%." The UM that do not comply with the DM of 15.5% should wait until they reach a 6.5° Brix average and no more than 10% of the fruit can be under 5.8° Brix, and no fruit below 13.5% of DM," she stated.

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