



## Argentina: New fungicides approved for blueberry production

Argentine authorities have approved the use of four new fungicides for blueberry production, in a development that will provide commercial benefits to growers.

Phytosanitary watchdog Senasa's announcement comes just two months before Argentina is due to begin shipping to the Chinese market for the first time.

The newly authorized products are Chlorothalonil, Iprodione, Captan and Fenhexamid, the latter two of which are also permitted by authorities in the Asian country.

Alejandro Pannunzio, president of regional body the Blueberry Producers' Association of Argentine Mesopotamia (APAMA), welcomed the decision.

"The approval of these products will have a significant impact because ... it allows us to be up to date with the requirements of the Chinese market," he said.

He said work had been underway for the last year and a half to approve the fungicides. The main objective was to give growers a greater availability of fungicides, allowing for increased rotation of products and therefore improved plant health.

"The approval also gives us a competitive advantage, as one of the fungicides has a lower cost than what everyone was using before," he said.

### Upcoming season

Chinese inspectors are due to visit the South American country in the coming weeks to carry out the final phytosanitary inspections and give the green light for exports, which will likely begin in late September.

Pannunzio estimated Argentine blueberry production would rise by 2,000 metric tons (MT) year-on-year to 19,000MT.

There are not yet export forecasts specifically for the Chinese market.

"The priority is to take firm and safe steps and to take the necessary time to develop this market in the same way as we have done with other countries, with patience and doing things well," he said.

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