

Chilean avocado industry expects to gain entrance to South Korean market in 2020

Chile's avocado industry just got one step closer to gaining entrance to the South Korean market. As proceedings continue in upcoming months, Chile says it could send avocado shipments as soon as August 2020, according to the Chilean Fruit Exporter's Association ASOEX.

Chile's ministry of agriculture SAG along with ASOEX announced the news on Monday. The groups have begun talks with South Korea's plant and animal safety agency (APQA) regarding the details of the deal and next steps.

Recently, inspectors from South Korea visited Chilean avocado orchards and packing facilities. During this visit, Chilean officials showed the authorities the industry's ongoing projects for pest management and production.

Although the industry has yet to hear back from South Korea on the official summary of the visit, Chile's industry "is expecting a positive response".

"Inspectors were happy with the visit and noted the quality of the fruit not only in how producers treat the crop but also in terms of the technology that our industry uses to keep harvest and packing efficient and sanitary," explained Miguel Canalecheverria of ASOEX.

Now that South Korean officials have toured Chilean production sites, the next phase is mainly administrative and will involve making slight changes to export agreements and legal processes.

"We're looking forward to this opportunity and hope that we're able to make official plans to open the South Korean market here soon. We have been working for years to achieve this market entrance for avocados and the recent visit we had from the South Korean authorities makes us even more



sure that our goal will be met very soon," detailed SAG director Horacio Borquez.

"We see the South Korean market as a great opportunity not only for us to diversify exports but also to continue creating a larger presence in Asian markets more generally," said president of ASOEX Ronald Bown.

Currently, South Korea is the second most important destination for overall exports out of Chile, behind China. In 2018, the country sent 54,705 metric tons (MT) of fresh fruit to South Korea - of which, table grapes, cherries and lemons made up a majority of shipments.

The Chilean avocado industry also added that it expects that the healthy eating habits of South Korean consumers will make its avocados a success.

David Yang, South Korean ambassador to Chile, commented that "Chile is a business that I would say is the biggest player in the region. Additionally, Chile was the first country in the world to sign the TLC agreement with South Korea - showing exactly how long the friendly relationship between the two countries has been,".

He went on to add that Chilean products have a good image among South Korean consumers.

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