

AUSTRALIA

JAIPA helps boost agri exports between Australia/Japan

Australia recently saw the fourth round of tariff cuts delivered under the trade deal with farmers and government officials taking the opportunity to proclaim its benefits.

Trade and Investment Minister Steven Ciobo said Australia was the only major agricultural exporter to have a Free Trade Agreement with Japan and exports were "booming under this landmark agreement".

Australian farmers are big winners from tariff cuts delivered under the ground-breaking Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAIPA).

Minister Steve said that, between 2014 and 2016 Australian exports of fresh table grapes increased 5183.5 % to \$30.8 million and carrot exports increased 499.9 % to \$3.4m. Australian exports of fresh orange and asparagus grew by almost 50%.

CHILE

Chilean grape producers are concerned about Peruvian competition

Because of the effects of weather (which led to overstocking and a reduction in prices), but also because of the



competition from Peruvian grapes, the Chilean table grapes industry didn't have a good start to the year.

According to Maria Ines Figari, the president of the Agricultural Society of the North (SAN) and director of the National Society of Agriculture (SNA) in Chile, the Peruvian factor has been the most important issue that they face because they are their competitors, as they export to the some of the same markets as Chilean grape producers, for example, to the US.

Peruvian plantations are much newer than the Chilean, so the products they harvest have a much better quality. There's not much we can do against that," she said.

In turn, Fernando Sat, the president of the table grapes committee of the Association of Fruit Exporters of Chile (Asoex), said that Peru was working

"with nearly 100 patented varieties, which is the new revolution that is coming, and is here to stay."

According to the Chilean industry, the harvests began 10 to 15 days earlier than expected due to climate change. As a result, the best prices for this product didn't reach US\$14 per box, which implies a loss of US\$6, deducting transportation and production costs.

To date, according to Asoex, since the country has exported 69 million boxes and has incurred losses amounted to US \$42 million.

EGYPT

Tecnova implements a greenhouse refrigeration system in Egypt

A new refrigeration system for greenhouses has been implemented in Cairo, Egypt by The Tecnova Technology Center. This will solve climate management problems in this country, and has completed the construction of 1.7 hectare prototype that will endorse the conclusions of trials developed at Tecnova.

This initiative came after the Egyptian government signed a collaboration agreement with CT Tecnova to solve a historical handicap in the country's agricultural sector.

"Tecnova is a specialist in high productivity technology for temperate climates. Our R & D & I area constantly innovates in this type of processes with the objective of reducing production



costs, increasing production yields and responding to historical problems in our sector," said its president, Ángel Barranco.

The technology developed by Almeria's technological center is highly valued in the Gulf countries, where the high temperatures impact farm productivity in a negative way. With this project, CT Tecnova will test the prototype and the innovations proposed for the development of new technologies in warm climates, having as a testing ground a scenario as unique as Egypt itself.

ITALY

Origin of tomatoes on the label

Italy wants the origin of tomatoes to be shown on the label of products containing processed tomatoes, just as with milk, durum wheat and rice.

The Minister of Agriculture Maurizio Martina announced that he would submit a new bill together with the Minister of Economic Development, Carlo Calende.

Since the beginning of this year, labels of domestic dairy products have to include the origin of the milk, in Italy. Then new labelling law requiring labels to contain the origin of rice, wheat and semolina in pasta products, have been reported to the EU. The corresponding bills have already passed and the law will apply from February 2018.

Martina stated the desire for greater transparency and the ability of consumers



to make better choices as reasons for the new initiative. The Italian tomato processing industry is struggling with tomato shortages due to the bad harvest caused by the weather this season.

INDIA

New packaging technologies for South America

India's Largest Multinational Flexible Packaging Materials and Solutions Company Uflex Ltd and its partner Perfotec B.V, have been working on new packaging solutions for vegetables, fruit and flowers. One of the most important markets for the two companies is South America.

"We've been expanding both our product range and the geography in which we're active. We've been working in different markets with successful prod-

ucts, such as Waterless flower packaging solutions for companies in South America," says Siva Shankaran of Flexfresh Uflex.

"An important project for us is a packaging solution for blueberries in Chile. Through the technology of Perfotec and Flexfresh, we've been able to extend the shelf life of Chilean blueberries from 30 or 35 days up to 50 days. They'll start using our product in October."

South American products can now compete on the Asian market at the same level as companies that are based closer to China and South East Asia. This will bring huge opportunities for Chilean companies with regards to the export of blueberries.

"We're also working with a large South American banana exporter. Banana exporters usually work with vacuum packaging. Through Flexfresh packaging, they can now naturally ripen the bananas and extend the shelf life to 60 days." Shankaran mentions that for the moment South America is easier to work with than other banana producing countries like the Philippines, as South America has a proper infrastructure in place.

Shankaran added that they've now appointed more distributors in Asia, such as in Taiwan and in Vietnam. They are also looking for opportunities in the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. "It's important to set up local contacts, as otherwise it wouldn't be possible to work with every country across the world."



Furthermore, Perfotec and Uflex are currently working for the first time with their Taiwanese distributor, Everscience, on spring onions for exports from Taiwan to Mainland China and HongKong. "The company has ordered flow-pack lines and Everscience is going to use Flexfresh solutions. Shelf life was a major issue and our packaging will help extend it," says Shankaran.

MEXICO

Tomato producers request elimination of US export quotas

In 1996 Mexico and the United States signed an agreement to establish that Mexican producers would export a 25-pound box of tomatoes - about 11.5 kilos - for no less than 8.35 dollars. This was because farmers in the US, especially in Florida, argued that the Mexican fruit had dumping prices, said Manuel Cazares, president of the Tomato Product System of Sonora.

After proving that it did not export its tomatoes at a dumping price, Mexico decided to sign this agreement, in which it was also stated that they had to submit a report on the status of certification of the fields each month to the Ministry of Agriculture of that country

Mexican producers of tomatoes have recently requested that the export quotas be eliminated from the export agreement

between the two nations when it is renegotiated, as it has generated higher costs.

The entire legal process has generated higher costs to producers, as they had to hire lawyers in Washington, whose six-monthly services can cost up to 350 thousand dollars.

The agreement is reviewed every five years and the Mexicans have complied because they consider that it is an important commercial relationship, as their exports amounted to \$2.16 billion dollars in 2016, i.e. 15% more than the previous year, according to data from the Ministry of Economy.

PERU

Peruvian agro-exports to Indonesia grows 261%

The growth of Indonesian economy grows is very much related to Peruvian agro-exports (traditional and non-traditional) it acquires. This is why in the first half of the year they totaled US \$ 9,381,000, achieving a growth of 261% as reported by the Association of Exporters (Adex).

According to figures from the Adex Data Trade Intelligence System, the agricultural-agroindustrial subsector accounts for 52.4% of total shipments to that destination.

The main items included grapes and cacao, followed by beverages, citrus

juices, Andean grains such as quinoa and chia, also pomegranate and canned tomatoes.

The Director of the Peruvian Commercial Office in Indonesia (OCEX Jakarta), Juan Carlos Valdivia, said that although there is currently no Peru-Indonesia trade agreement, business opportunities are diverse.

He further said, "In fresh fruits, for example, we have a great advantage because of a coastal climate that we must take advantage of. That makes us more competitive".

He further stated that at Adex food conference in Indonesia, Valdivia said that Peru could ship fresh and processed products, chocolate and other hydrobiological products to the Asian market, as well as ladies accessories, handicrafts, leather sandals and mining machinery.

SPAIN

Murcia seeks new crops to face climate change

In order to address climatic changes which will further complicate the situation of water deficit for both irrigated and rainfed crops, Murcia's agricultural producers and horticultural entrepreneurs are working hand in hand with the Council of Agriculture. They are in search for new varieties of traditional crops and in the production of subtropical fruits in a clear attempt to address climate change.

General director of Innovation, Productions and Agro-Food Markets, Fulgencio Pérez explains, "One of the basic goals is the fight against climate change and our role is to advise farmers to opt for new varieties or new crops, but they are the ones who have to make the decision". He further adds that they also collaborate with producers in the search for new crop varieties that are more resistant to water stress.

To this end, they work with the Murcian Institute for Agricultural Research and Development and Food (Imida). In fact, several projects are currently underway.

In the fruit-growing sector, researchers have been working "for a



long time" with companies and growers in the introduction of subtropical fruits in the fields of the Region, mainly on the coast. This includes mangoes, papayas, avocados, cherimoyas and pitahayas.

The first estimates, which are not yet official because the Council still needs to conduct some monitoring and controls, point to there being 22 hectares of mangoes in Aguilas and Mazarrón, 24 hectares of papayas in Mazarrón, 14 hectares of avocados in Fuente Álamo and Cartagena, 1 hectare of cherimoyas in the Campo de Cartagena, and half a hectare of pitahayas in Mazarrón.

SOUTH KOREA

South Korean avocado imports grow six fold

There has been a dramatic increase in South Korea's imports of avocados in recent years, while riding on the surging popularity of the fruit for its versatility in cooking and health benefits as showed by industry data.

According to data compiled by the Korea Customs Service, the amount of avocados imported last year reached 2,915 tons, a sixfold surge compared to 457 tons in 2010. The figure is expected to reach almost 5,000 tons by the end this year.

Korean retail giant Lotte Mart's discount warehouse brand Vic Market also reported that its sales of avocados this year have increased by 36.1 % so far. Of all imported fruits sold at Vic Market, avocado ranked sixth, up five notches from 11th in 2015.



TAIWAN

Pineapple sales red-hot in mainland China

In past soldiers from Taiwan were settled in farmlands to grow food. They started from rice but due to tough environment which even led to death of eight soldiers, there was little success.

Then they made some changes to grow sweet potatoes, papaya and pineapple instead, which was an unintentional move, but they were in luck! The soldiers grew the best pineapples in the Pingtung region, even in the whole of Taiwan.

Mr. Lin, president of the Taiwan Nongyiyuan Agricultural Co. Ltd said, "As an entrepreneur engaged in real estate and the hotel industry for many years in Taiwan, I once tasted the local diamond pineapple by chance five years ago, and instantly I was attracted by the taste.

After a careful investigation and learning from the professionals, I began to grow and sell the diamond pineapples. So far, we've already built a stable customer base in the mainland market with high quality pineapples, a good corporate reputation and a strong brand."

As is known to all, pineapple is the leading industry of Taiwan and in the past few years, the total yield of pineapple has been showing a rising trend. Back in 2016, the growth of pineapple was dealt a devastating blow by a storm that lasted nearly 1 and a half months. The roots of many pineapples were rotted by being soaked in water for a long time, and the fruit size was very small. The storm led to a direct loss of about 70%, especially in the Pingtung region.

At present, the pineapples that grow better are those after the storm in November last year, and part of them will be harvested this month. Compared to Pingtung, the damage to the pineapple situation in Gaoxiong, Tainan and Jiayi is better."

"In addition to the climate, the growth of the pineapple is also affected by topography and soil quality. The fruit quality and taste of Pingtung pineapples are better, which is mainly due to the geographical advantages of Pingtung and its relatively mature cultivation and sales market. Taiwan has an area of more than 10 thousand hectares, of which 3000-4000 hectares are located in Pingtung. This year, affected by thNETHERLAND

USA

Demand for mangosteen strengthens

In Mexico and Guatemala, mangosteens only grow for a few months over the summer rainy season in the tropical parts of the countries. At other times of the year, mangosteens are sourced from Southeast Asia, primarily Thailand, where they are available year-round.

The short Central American Mangosteen season has just about finished for the year. Most importers sourcing their fruit from this region have now sold out of the product. They now focus on shipping their remaining stock to customers who will have to wait until next summer to get new stock from Central America.

Soconusco produce are a Mexican company who distribute mangosteens in the United States from their Texas warehouse. Enrique Vera of Soconusco, said that the season was not affected by any other weather events. "The mangosteen season in Mexico and Guatemala is finished for the year now. It's only a short one, lasting about 3 months from June to early September. It's been a pretty good season, supply was steady and the growing regions were not affected by any of the hurricanes that have passed through."

The United States has to import all their mangosteens, because the fruit is not able to grow commercially due to its challenging weather and soil requirements. However, demand is strong and suppliers like Soconusco continue to sell out of the product.

"Mangosteens need to be in the field for at least 5 or 6 years before they fruit, and it's a really difficult crop to grow," said Vera. "We generally order 4 to 5 pallets a year and they always sell out. Every year, we gradually increase our order and are able to fill the growing demand. Many of the customers are Asian grocers, but we sell to a mix of smaller retailers as well as large chains."

Vera said that, despite the strong demand, they are prudent with their orders in order to maintain fruit quality as



well as a sustained price. "When you order mangosteens, you need to sell it right away. It should take no longer than 3 weeks for the product to make its way from the field to the consumer. This ensures the fruit remains as fresh as possible and will maintain the delicious taste and rich color," he explained. "The market price for mangosteens has hovered around \$35-\$45 for a 10lb carton. It can fluctuate with volumes and if we see a larger amount being imported, this tends to put a downward pressure on prices."

VIETNAM

First shipment of Vietnamese dragon fruit headed to Australia

The Hoang Phat Company exported the first batch of Vietnamese dragon fruit to Australia by in the southern province of

Long An. This was announced the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Long An authorities recently. According to Hoang Phat Company Director Nguyen Thi Kim Thoa, the batch comprised 3 tonnes of white-flesh dragon fruit.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Tran Thanh Nam said the export of the first batch of dragon fruit to Australia is an important event for the agricultural sector, marking the efforts of farmers, exporters and relevant agencies.

Pham Van Canh, Vice chairman of Long An People's Committee said the success opens the way for the province's fruit to enter other choosy markets. He added that at present, 80 % of dragon fruit grown in Long An is shipped to China, 15 % is sold on the domestic market and only 5% is exported to other markets including Japan, Thailand, the US and Europe. ♦

