

## ARGENTINA

### Argentina wants its population to consume more fruits and vegetables

A Public private meeting was organized by the Ministry of Agricultural Business of the Nation to promote an increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables in the country, which is in the order of 200 grams per day per person, i.e. half of the amount recommended (excluding tubers) to have a balanced and healthy diet, and quite far from the ideal 700 grams (300 grams in fruits and 400 in vegetables).

The main challenge faced is long-term and involves social habits, which are very difficult to modify. According to estimates, Argentines consume one fruit a day, when they should consume at least three.

To achieve this increase, a collective network of institutions and companies with much symbolic weight, such as the United Nations Food Organization (FAO), the provincial ministries, the municipalities, Health and Production organizations, technicians from the INTA, Senasa, and different faculties are working together. In an act headed by Minister Luis Miguel Etchevehere, representatives of these entities and others signed a document where they expressed their commitment to promote a healthier diet.

"This is something that neither the private sector nor the State can achieve alone," stated the minister, while expressing his enthusiasm for this initiative. The representatives of the companies linked to production, such as Tropical, which develops a massive campaign to increase fruit consumption in schools among children and teenagers, also expressed their optimism. Andres Murchison, the Secretary of Food and Bioeconomy and Fernando Blanco Muiño, national director of Consumer Protection highlighted the importance of multiplying this type of action.

Mercedes Nimo, the Undersecretary of Food and one of the people promoting this initiative, spoke about their goals. "We want to increase consumption, which



would boost production, and generate a varied and quality offer."

To improve the Argentinian diet, the sector will increase sanitary controls, scientific research and information, and focus on promotion in wholesale and retail outlets. Another idea is to put together a unified calendar of seasonal fruits and vegetables. "If we want to change habits, we have to do it together," Nimo stated.

## AUSTRALIA

### Australian Summer fruit exports to China surge ahead

The Australian summer fruit industry has recorded its best export season in over a decade as the new access to China saw exports soar. In results released by Summerfruit Australia for the 2017/18 season, the exports of Australian peaches, nectarines, plums and apricots increased 27% year on year to 17,785 tonnes, worth A\$65.17 million (US\$48m).

China was the leading destination receiving 4,985 tonnes during the season from November to May in addition to Hong Kong taking 3,308 tonnes. Australia gained access for nectarines to China in 2016 and followed by peaches, plums and apricots in 2017.

Summerfruit Australia CEO John Moore said "For China to become the leading market for Australian summerfruit in the first year of full access is a fantastic result rewarding all the hard work by the industry and government over many years of negotiations."

Australian Summer fruit exports have been on a pathway of sustained growth

over the past 8 years and have increased by an average 14 % per year, before the 2018 season surge driven by the new China demand. "We are well on our way to our goal of exporting 20 % of our national production." said Mr Moore.

Some 75 per cent of the fruit was grown and exported from around Swan Hill and the Goulburn Valley in Victoria, and 16 per cent from New South Wales. Western Australian summerfruit exports lifted 127 per cent to account for 6 per cent of national exports.

According to the export analysis by Fresh Intelligence Consulting, over 40 % of the summerfruit exports were nectarines, 30 % plums, 28 % peaches and 2 % apricots.

Asian markets including China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia account for over 75 % of Australian summerfruit exports and a further 20 % is exported to Middle East markets.

## CHILE

### Chilean pears expected to enter China market in 2019

Chile is expected to export its pears for the first time to the Chinese market next year after a series of successful talks between the representatives of the two countries. The Chilean Fruit Exporters Association said that the two sides reached an "important agreement" to speed up the market access process. The talks also discussed topics such as avocado exports, frozen product exports and electronic certification in areas affected by flies.

Regarding the entry of Chilean pears into Chinese market, the two sides reached

an agreement on pests and certain plant quarantine measures. It is expected that an export agreement will be prepared in September with a view to receiving Chinese inspectors in December.

It is expected that the export of pears will begin in March 2019. Fresh grapes, cherries, plums, kiwis, apples, blueberries and nectarines currently entering the Chinese market from Chile are worth \$231 million in season 2016-2017.

### **GHANA**

#### **OTC Organics is the first to offer organic passioncuja from Ghana**

OTC Organics B.V., distributor of organic fruit and vegetables, is always searching for new products with new (improved) tastes, shapes and colors or improved characteristics of a product. As of September they have a special novelty available "the passioncuja". A delicious fruit with a touch of sour of the yellow maracuja (the yellow sister of the passion fruit) and the slightly sweeter taste and the appearance of the passion fruit, but with a pink thin skin.

Núria Vlonk-Cunha Soares, Supply Development Manager at OTC Organics B.V. says: "We have come into contact with a Dutch grower who has been living and working in Ghana for 20 years now and has his own farm of more than 80 hectares, 70 kilometers northwest of the capital city Accra. This grower, who graduated from the Higher Agricultural School in Deventer, The Netherlands, once ended up as a trainee in Ghana. The country pleased him so well that he determined to remain. On his own farm you imagine yourself in the Garden of Eden, a beautiful growing area full of all kinds of (fruit) trees, where he grows organic ylang ylang, vanilla, sandalwood and cinnamon, mainly for the cosmetic market. I got to know him as an innovating grower who is constantly searching for new products and who does not back away from a challenge. We are very pleased that we have entered into a partnership."

According to Núria "This year we are starting with limited volumes, but the expectation is that we will receive more

production next year, because the grower has planted 10 hectares for 2019. From September 2018 the passioncuja is available at OTC Organics B.V. Depending on climatic conditions; we expect the season to last until December. Interested customers can order a free sample box to experience the taste."

### **INDONESIA**

#### **Indonesia revises requirements for horticultural imports**

A new regulation as recently issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture recently that eliminates the use of "harvest periods" as a basis to restrict horticultural product imports. However, the regulation also gives the Director General (DG) for Horticulture new and expanded authority to consider "domestic horticultural production" when issuing import licenses.

Local importers believe the DG will use this expanded authority to continue to restrict the timing and quantity of horticultural product imports. The Ministry's burdensome and restrictive import licensing system is one of the reasons U.S. fresh fruit exports to Indonesia have declined significantly in recent years, including a drop of another 34% so far in 2018.

Instead of using "harvest periods" as a basis to restrict issuance of IRs and imports, the revised regulation gives the Director General (DG) for Horticulture new and expanded authority to consider "domestic horticultural production" when issuing IRs.

Previously, in considering IR requests, the Ministry used a calendar, which was

based on harvest periods, to allow or ban imports during specific months. Reportedly, the Ministry is still using that same calendar, but now justifying the import bans during certain months based on consideration of "domestic horticultural production," rather than the previous harvest periods' criteria.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

#### **British seed potato varieties approved for Kenya**

British producers have obtained approval to export potato seeds to Kenya, where the crop is the second most important after maize. Ten potato varieties were trialed at three separate farms over two seasons with the free variety Cara and two James Hutton Ltd varieties (Gemson and Lady Balfour) making the grade.

In the trials, Cara yielded very strongly over the course of both seasons with a combined average yield of 52 tons per hectare. However, the top performer in terms of yield was Lady Balfour at 56 tons per hectare, while Gemson yielded 42 tons per hectare on average.

About 2-3 million tons of potatoes are grown annually in Kenya, however most farmers use home-saved seed and achieve yields of as little as 10 tons per hectare.

The announcement is good news for British seed producers. Rob Burns, AHDB Head of Crop Market Trade Development said: "Kenya has a burgeoning middle class; and as well as table varieties there is a growing need for processing potato seed to supply the growing market for premium potato-based products such as crisps and chips."



Jonathan Snape, Head of James Hutton Ltd added: "We are delighted that two of the varieties we bred for Greenvale AP and Grampian Growers have performed so well in these trials and we will be engaging with representatives of the Kenyan potato industry in order to open up this potentially important new export market."

### UAE

#### **Abu Dhabi Farmers' Services announces Agricultural Plan**

Abu Dhabi Farmers' Service Centre (ADFSC) has announced its 'Agricultural Production Plan' for the 2018-2019 season, starting mid-August and continuing until June 2019.

68 varieties of fresh vegetables, including 6 fruit crops has been identified by the ADFSC for the first time in the agricultural plan to encourage farmers to cultivate certain types of fruits. This also includes 18 varieties of organic crops, trying to encourage farmers to switch to organic farming.

While the agricultural season plan 2018-2019 introduces diversification of production of various crops required for the market during the next winter and summer seasons, three primary crops still account for about 70 % of the total expected production. Cucumbers alone accounts for about 38 % of the total expected production, followed by tomatoes (26 %), and capsicum (6 %) of the total production expected to be supplied to the markets.

According to wam.ae, the Farmers' Service Centre organized a farmer forum to familiarize them with the details of the plan.

"This year's agricultural plan represents a significant shift in the work of the Centre, as it focuses on encouraging the shift towards organic farming and fruit cultivation," said Nasser Mohammed Al Junaibi, Acting CEO of the ADFSC.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### **Demand for local mushrooms on the rise over winter**

According to a mushroom grower in New Zealand, demand for its produce typically increases throughout the winter months. The Te Mata Mushroom Company is based in Havelock North on the North Island, producing between 20-25 tonnes of fresh mushrooms a week, consistently throughout the year.

"Demand is higher in winter due to the reduced availability of other local vegetables and the increase in price of imported produce," owner Michael Whittaker said. "Commercially, mushrooms are grown indoors, so they are a year-round, non-seasonal product. Because mushrooms are non-seasonal, the shelf price is pretty stable."

The company, which began in 1967, only supplies the North Island domestic market and has no plans for export at this stage, producing both white and portobello (or brown) mushrooms. Mr Whittaker says they are grown in climate controlled rooms, so seasonal variation is minimal.

"Depending on the stage of growth, each variety can be sold as buttons (round, unopened mushrooms); cups (just starting to open) or flats (completely open). Each stage is useful for different recipes, portobellos tend to have a more robust flavor

than whites". However, because commercial mushrooms are grown indoors they may only see a very small amount of sunlight in their life cycle. But the company's top product is the country's only Vitamin D mushrooms, which has a number of health benefits.

"We also introduced New Zealand's first Vitamin D enhanced mushroom," Mr Whittaker said. "If exposed to sunlight mushrooms will naturally produce Vitamin D even after picking. Our Vitamin D mushrooms are exposed to a special UV light before packing that allows them to produce large amounts of Vitamin D, a very topical issue at the moment, especially coming into winter."

### UKRAINE

#### **Ukraine fruit exports increase 59% in first half of 2018**

Ukraine exported fruit and berries worth \$100 million in the first half of 2018, which is 59% more than in the same period of 2017. According to the Ukrsadprom association, the main products in the structure of exports were walnuts worth \$64 million, frozen berries for \$23 million, apples and pears for \$8 million.

"Compared with last year, the volume of walnut exports increased from 12,000 to 19,000 tonnes, apples and pears from 6,000 to 24,000 tonnes, while the deliveries of frozen berries decreased slightly from 17,000 to 14,000 tonnes," the report says.

The main buyers of Ukrainian fruit and nuts, according to the association, are the countries of the European Union, which account for more than 60% of the value of exports.

"In the six months, the largest fruit supplies in monetary terms from Ukraine were made to Poland for \$11.2 million, France for \$9.9 million, Turkey for \$9.3 million, Belarus for \$8 million, Germany for \$5.1 million, Greece for \$5 million and the Netherlands for \$4.7 million," the report says. As noted, Ukrainian apples are mostly delivered to Belarus (46% of the value of supplies), Moldova (21%), and Sweden (10%). ♦

