

CHINA

China is expected to replace the US as the main destination of Chilean nectarines

In February of last year, the Chinese market was opened for Chilean nectarines. The opening of the Asian giant meant an important change for local exporters in terms of distribution, due to that destination's great purchase potential. At that time it was difficult to anticipate how serious the impact would be in the 2017-2018 season. However, exporters are already noticing the consequences.

According to data from Odepa, between January and November of last year shipments to China exceeded three thousand tons of fresh nectarines, an amount that exceeded by more than 28 times the 109 tons shipped to that market in the same period of 2016.

The Minister of Agriculture, Carlos Furche, said: "This season, China is going to become the main destination market for this fruit. Its opening occurred in the final part of the last season of nectarines; so it wasn't very noticeable." "This year the change will be very noticeable and it will have a positive impact on prices," he added. "Before the opening of China, the United States was the main market for Chilean nectarines and there was little competition from other destinations. Now that the Chinese market is open, there will be a better distribution of the Chilean



offer and, in addition, a better price level," he stated.

The president of the Federation of Fruit Producers, Luis Schmidt, stated that the Chinese market had always had an enormous potential for Chilean fruit, and, in this case, he said, it is an excellent alternative for white pulp nectarines.

HONDURAS

Organic production gains ground

Consumers have become more demanding of quality standards and the way the food they eat is produced, so they prefer to buy products that have organic seals. This is why more and more Honduran farmers are cultivating organic products, a market that is growing internationally.

In the last ten years, the number of producers of this type of fruits, vegetables, and grains increased from 1,500 to 6,451. Meanwhile, the planted area increased from 4,400 to 31,574 hectares.

Carlos Galo, the head of the Department of Organic Agriculture of the National Service of Health and Food Safety (Senasa), said that last year the country had exported about 67,126 metric tons of organic products, i.e. 2,808 metric tons or more 4.35% than the 64,318 tons exported in 2016.

Honduras currently produces more than 17 different organic products, such as orange, sweet potato, vegetables, lime, banana, plantain, passion fruit, pineapple, and chili peppers. Most of the production is exported to the international market, mainly to the United States, Europe, and Japan.

HUNGARY

Hungarian agricultural exports to Germany on rise

The Hungarian-German agricultural trade turnover is likely to have risen again in 2017, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture (FM). Exports grew at a faster rate than imports.

Preliminary data from January to October 2017 show that Hungarian agricultural exports to Germany grew by 24% compared to a year earlier, reported the FM in the framework of Berlin's International Green Week. Exports were



worth 1.162 billion Euro, while imports from Germany rose by 21% to 937 million Euro.

Hungarian vegetables and fruits, mainly peppers, sour cherries and peaches, are still popular in Germany and record the best sales for Hungarian agriculture. The turnover of processed products, such as salami, honey and wine, is also constantly increasing.

INDIA

Record 305.4 million tonnes output for Indian horticultural crop

Final estimates for 2016-17 showed that production of horticultural crops like vegetables and fruits were 300.6 million tonnes, a year-on-year rise of over 5%. Production of these crops is likely to touch a record 305.4 million tonnes in 2017-18, about 1.6% higher than the previous year and 8% higher than the previous five years' average. This is according to the preliminary estimates of the Agriculture Ministry.

Within horticulture, production of vegetables is estimated at 181 million tonnes for 2017-18, about 1% higher than the year before, while that of fruits is estimated at 95 million tonnes, 2% higher than the previous year. Between 2015-16 and 2017-18, productivity of horticultural crops rose from 11.7 tonnes per hectare to an estimated 12.3 tonnes per hectare.

Production estimates for specific crops showed onions at 21.4 million tonnes, about 4.5% lower than the year before, and potatoes at 49.3 million tonnes, marginally higher than the 48.6 million tonnes in 2016-17. Production of tomatoes is estimated to rise 7.7% year-on-year in 2017-18 to 22.3 million tonnes.

The record production during 2017-18 will mark the sixth straight year of horticulture production outstripping that of food grains (estimated at 276 million tonnes in 2016-17), suggesting a structural change in Indian agriculture where farmers are increasingly growing perishable commercial crops due to a growing market and a quicker cash flow as these crops require less time from sowing to marketing.



ITALY

Lumigrey reflecting screens

A screen that combines a simple shading function with the capability of monitoring greenhouse temperatures, which is essential, especially in warmer months. These are just some of the characteristics of the Lumigrey® reflecting screens, introduced by Agritech as an alternative to traditional shading nets.

The reflecting plate prevents the structure from overheating. Thanks to its rachel weaving, Lumigrey® is available with a shading factor of between 30 and 80%.

As for salad and spinach, Lumigrey® 40 and 50% practically replaced the "technique" of applying lime on films, creating a more suitable microclimate inside the greenhouse and guaranteeing the most suitable light conditions.

Valerian is particularly sensitive to temperatures above 35°C, especially when it's really bright or if sunlight hits the leaves directly. In order to obtain resistant homogeneous plants with a bright colour, the perfect balance between shade, temperature and light must be obtained. This is why best results

are obtained with Lumigrey® 80, which keeps temperatures down limiting UV rays.

NIGERIA

First 'Dry Port' of Nigeria comes on line

Recently, president Muhammadu Buhari was set to commission Nigeria's first Inland Dry Port, in Kaduna. This will come as a relief for the importers and exporters in the North Western part of the country.

Being directly connected by road, rail and air to a sea port, the dry port is an inland intermodal terminal, and will operate as a centre for trans-shipment of sea cargo to inland destinations. According to the Director, Special Duties, of the Nigerian Shippers Council, Ignatius Nweke, the port, built by the Kaduna Inland Dry Port Limited, is among the seven dry ports being promoted by the Council.

Kaduna State is the largest producer of ginger in Nigeria, and it is expected that the market for Kaduna ginger will improve tremendously once the dry port becomes operational.

POLAND

Polish carboard packaging getting a lot of attention

Nominated for an innovation award at last year's Fruit Logisitica 2017 in Berlin, and featured in the spotlight for Fruit Logistica 2018, SoFruPak is positive about the future of their cardboard packaging solutions.

SoFruPak specializes in the packaging of soft fruits and vegetables and according to Commercial director Adam Sikorski, the system can be easily modified to fit customer needs for a variety of products. The cardboard packaging is sent as flat-pack, making it easy to transport.

The boxes can then be constructed in two clicks and in addition to the core function, can be used as an advertising medium, with graphics printed directly onto the box.

Sikorski added "We participated in a lot of meetings during 2017 with countries like Germany and Switzerland, who have shown a lot of interest in our product. We even won the Innovation award at the Expose fair in Karlsruhe. This week we'll be testing the market in the Benelux by attending the 'Strawberry Day' on 10 January (www.aardbeidag.nl), followed by the International Soft Fruit Conference, both being held in the Netherlands,"

The company continues to develop, and the newest line, SoFruMiniPak® Premium has been designed with a plastic lid, to meet EU closed packaging requirements. A variety of sizes are available,

150g, 250g and 500g.

The new series of packaging in System SoFruBox® are equipped with a hole in the bottom of the boxes, which helps to cool the fruits faster and more efficiently. The company plans on continuing to share their product with the world this year, participating in exhibitions in France, Spain, Italy, Finland, Russia and Dubai.

SPAIN

Almeria mini-greenhouse nominated for 21st Entrepreneur Awards

Niwa, a company that sells mini-greenhouses, will represent Almeria in the 11th edition of the 21st Entrepreneur Awards promoted by CaixaBank with the collaboration of the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge of the Government of Andalusia. The name of the winning company will be announced in February.

Niwa is a company under the CADE of Almeria that is developing a hardware and software platform for the marketing of a mini-greenhouse, whose owner can set it up at home with an Internet connection, allowing for the cultivation of vegetables for self-consumption.

Niwa's founders are Javier Morillas and Agnieszka Nazaruk, who have devised this intelligent hydroponic system. It is a small greenhouse that fits in a home's living room and connects to mobile devices.

Morillas began working on the idea several years ago, after thinking about

the long trips that tomatoes or escaroles have to make before reaching the final consumer.

Morillas thus conceived a technological solution that would help tackle problems such as the lack of knowledge, time and space. Niwa does not require agricultural soil, but mineral solutions, and includes a series of sensors to create the perfect climate for each plant and each stage of its development.

The key is how easy they are to use, since the users only have to plant the seed they want to grow and log it in a mobile application. It is possible to grow tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, lettuce, herbs or flowers, among other things.

It is an idea that currently has no competitor in the market and which stands out for the simplicity of its use. After manufacturing several prototypes, the company is working to gain ground in this new market.

SWITZERLAND

Sustainable energy supply for Grob's vegetable cultivation

In recent months, after an oil spill, various protective measures for additional water treatment, water control, recording, water regulation and an oil filter have been installed and tested. During the approximately one-year long pumping tests, the long-term effects on thermal water are investigated under realistic conditions by varying the pumping rates.

It will probably be in the second quarter of 2018 that the pumping tests of the geothermal plant in Schlattigen will start. The plant should sustainably contribute to the energy supply of the family vegetable farm Grob.

The Grob family vegetable farm in Schlattigen has historically been heated through natural gas and oil. The total energy consumption of the farm is about 20 GWh per year, which corresponds to about 2 million liters of heating oil. In the future, the family-owned company intends to use the warm, approximately 60o deep underground water for heating the greenhouses, which was collected in



the two wells that were built after the project started in 2010.

The cooled and treated water will be discharged into the Rhine, in compliance with all legal requirements. For this purpose, a closed draining system and various protective measures were implemented. Last year, oil was discovered in the artesian thermal water. The examination of the oily admixtures by a specialized laboratory shows that it is natural oil, which occurs in the sediments of Northern Switzerland in small quantities.

With the now installed measures for the treatment of the deep underground water, with filter and oil separator, the oil is completely separated and retained. For the pumping test above Diessenhofen, an oil barrier will also be installed in the Rhine as a preventative measure.

The pumping test is resumed only after the installed treatment plants have been tested and approved, and the required cantonal permit has been issued.

The results of the pumping test provide the basis for the license application for long-term use and to confirm the operating concept. Based on the data collected, the responsible authorities of the canton of Thurgau are expected to decide in 2019 whether and in which way the well with the thermal water can be used permanently.

SOUTH AFRICA

South African litchis made hay in Europe this season

In what has generally been an off year for South African litchi producers, one farm considers themselves fortunate for a number of reasons. Not only did their litchi harvest exceed the already large crop of last year, but they had a relatively empty market in Europe for the start of their season with Madagascar coming in late and volumes from Mauritius and Réunion all but non-existent this year.

"We were lucky, we had a very big, very keen crop, a record crop in fact, totalling 590,000 cartons," says Stuart Butcher, marketing director of Malelane-based Tomahawk Farming. "Last year, too, we had a good crop and we thought



that perhaps it would be down this year, but no. Also, because of the cool, over-cast conditions we had little incidence of sunburn. The quality and size were really good so the packout percentage was higher than normal and actual cartons that were packed ended up being more than last year."

"This season we had a decent air freight window, where last year offered very poor air freight opportunities. We started air freight with very low volumes by the end of October, with the early varieties like Third Month Red and Early Delight before going over to the main crop of Mauritius litchis which continued through until mid-December with air-freight.

When litchi volumes from Madagascar, Mauritius and Réunion are low, it makes a massive difference for us."

The last sea freight shipments of Tomahawk's litchis are arriving in Europe now; 95% of their export product is marketed in Europe and the balance to the Middle East and USA. However, there are high hopes for the US market that opened up for South Africa in December 2015. "A new market like the US will have a massive impact on the industry.

We learned a lot during the first trial year when there were some delays and it took three weeks to get the fruit to market that just doesn't work with litchis. This year we streamlined the process, we did pre-cooling and it has gone well thus far," he says. "We haven't sent a lot, probably a hundred or so pallets, but we're hoping in two to three years volumes will pick up substantially."

SPAIN

Alibaba seeks to expand agreements with Spanish food companies

Asian e-commerce giant Alibaba is also strengthening the foundations of its business model in Spain through its subsidiary Alibaba Ecommerce Spain, S.L. This company, constituted in May 2017 and called Gratingar until last September, has recently received an injection of social capital worth € 200,000, reaching a total disbursement of € 203,500, as revealed in the Commercial Register.

This contribution has been made in the course of its settlement process in Spain, which has been underway since late 2016 and led by Rodrigo Cipriani Foresio, Managing Director of Alibaba for Southern Europe.

According to Alibaba Group, the mission of Cipriani Foresio is to connect consumers and suppliers, particularly SME's and large companies, and help them take advantage of all the opportunities of the Alibaba ecosystem. Working hand in hand with him are Ernesto Caccavale, head for business development at Alibaba in Spain and Portugal (mainly oriented to the development of the B2C marketplaces of Alibaba, Tmall and Tmall Global, as well as the B2B marketplace Alibaba.com) and Estela Ye, which leads the AliExpress team in the Spanish market.

The future development of the Asian giant in Spain will give Spanish companies access to their more than 500 million current consumers. "We offer brands and

companies the essential technological infrastructure, marketing knowledge and business operations necessary to take advantage of the power of the internet." Ultimately, we allow companies to transform the way they market, sell and operate, and our long-term goal is to serve 2,000 million consumers and millions of small businesses around the world, also in Spain," said sources from the company.

Thus, the objective of the group, chaired by Jack Ma, is to continue increasing the number of companies of different sizes, focusing on the main Spanish sectors, such as fashion, accessories, beauty, baby products and food and beverages (in particular, wine, olive oil and preserves).

"We want to help Spanish businesses succeed in China, and not only those who have no presence and need support to expand their supply, but also those who had not considered the possibility of selling to Chinese consumers, helping them from the get-go with their cross-border transactions," they explain.

Spain accounted for 57% of the oranges exported by the EU in 2016

57% of the oranges exported by the European Union (EU) in 2016 came from Spain, which shipped 1.6 million tonnes of the 2.7 million exported by EU countries that year, as reported by the Statistical Office Eurostat. Spain also accounts for approximately half of the EU's total acreage devoted to the production of this fruit, which amounts to about 280,000 hectares.

The Spanish production was much greater than that recorded by the second largest exporter of oranges in the EU, which was Greece with 462,000 tonnes (17% of the EU total). The 2.7 million oranges exported by the EU, which were worth 1,800 million Euro, were mostly (90%) shipped to other European countries. Three Member States alone accounted for half of the EU's orange imports: the Netherlands, which bought 548,000 tonnes of this fruit in 2016; France, with 506,000 tonnes; and Germany, with 490,000 tonnes.



The oranges that arrived in European countries in 2016 from outside the EU came mainly from South Africa (404,000 tonnes, 43% of exports from outside the EU) and Egypt (266,000 tonnes, 28%).

URUGUAY

Puro Jugo, bag in a box, a new 100% natural apple juice

Puro Jugo is a new way for Uruguayans to consume fruit. It is a way to make them see that they can consume healthy and tasty food in a very convenient manner, by just pressing a button and serving it in a glass. This new product of the Moizo Fruit company is being marketed in the innovative Bag in Box system, a format that allows the company to better preserve the beneficial qualities of the juice, without altering its flavor, and to store it for up to a month after having opened it.

The company, which is working to launch new varieties, currently 3 apple varieties are the delicious variety, the granny smith variety, and a mix of the previous two varieties. According to Andres Moizo, one of the people in charge of the company, "many elderly people and those with diabetes problems consume green apples because they contain a lower degree of natural sugar. Meanwhile, children prefer the Red Delicious for its sweetness. We are also working on a pear juice, but this will be marketed later."

The consumers' response has been very good because Uruguay only used to sell nectars and concentrates. As a result, Moizo said, "when people try our juices they tell us that they taste like real apples. Our juices are rich and healthy products, 100% natural and don't have any type of additives, not even water. We only crush the fruit, press it, pasteurize it and package it. That's why people's response has been so good. They are thrilled by its great taste and quality." ◆

