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Asiafruit celebrates two decades of change



Asiafruit Congress reflects on the evolution of the Asian market and asks what lies ahead for suppliers to the region.

Asia has reshaped the international fresh produce landscape over the past 20 years and will set the agenda for global suppliers in the coming decade as rising income levels continue to fuel demand for premium imported fruit.

This was the opening message from the 20th edition of Asiafruit Congress, which drew more than 450 delegates from 41 countries to AsiaWorld-Expo in Hong Kong on Tuesday. Looking back over key developments during the past two decades, Asiafruit editor John Hey described how Asia has gone from being a destination for surplus production to a priority market where there is still huge potential for growth.

The Asiafruit Congress has charted the evolution of the Asian market throughout its 20-year history. In that time China has gone from being a closed market relying exclusively on the grey channel for imported fruit to one of the most sophisticated consumer markets in the world.

At the same time, China is exerting a growing influence as a supplier of fresh fruits and vegetables as investments in domestic farming accelerate productivity gains.

Delegates heard that while digitalisation, the emergence of multi-channel retailing and the explosion of young,

aspirational consumers would ensure the continued growth of the Asian market in the next decade, retail consolidation and increasing food safety demands are set to create new challenges for suppliers.

The big winners in Asia will be the companies with the strongest brands who can adapt their offer to the taste profiles of Asian consumers.