By Chris Komorek

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Agriculture positively impacts poverty in Peru

Peru's booming agriculture sector has provided new opportunities and better living conditions for employees

As Peru looks to establish itself as a major global producer and exporter, people working in the industry continue to reap the benefits of a rapidly growing sector.

In his presentation at the 2019 Asiafruit Business Forum, general manager of Provid, Peru's peak body for table grape producers, Carlos Zamorano, said employment had almost doubled in the thirteen years between 2004 and 2017.

"In 2004 there was 462,000 jobs in the agriculture sector, that number increased to 809,000 in 2017, thanks to modern agricultural practices," said Zamorano.

New jobs has led to more opportunities for young people and women to enter the industry, and women now have greater representation, making up 45.96 per cent of the workforce in 2015.

Wages in the industry are steadily growing, too, and are now substantially higher than the minimum vital remuneration (RMV) amount, specific to Peru.

In the capital, Lima, the average monthly salary is 930 soles (US$275). For agricultural employees, the average salary sits at 1,506 soles (US$443) per month.

Better wages has helped pull people out of poverty, said Zamorano.

"In 2004, 81.3 per cent of people in the industry were living in poverty. That has dropped to 38.3 per cent in 2017," he said.

"Employees are earning more money, they have easier access to clean water and sanitation, better health and well being and also greater opporutnities to further education."

China's next generation are opting to move to big cities instead of working in the agricultural industry. Zamorano believes the best way to encourage them into the industry is to incentivise the work.

"As we have seen in Peru, the incenitives of better education, access to safe water

and the health benefits has helped bring young people in," he said.

"I believe this could work in China, but obviously it's not as simple as that."