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Zespri targets US market

Consumer and market research the cornerstone of Zespri's push to increase Kiwifruit sales in US



The world's leading Kiwifruit marketer, Zespri, has shifted its marketing focus towards research, as it aims to increase sales in the US.

Zespri opened its pan-American office in 2017, and last year recorded sales slightly short of US\$100m, representing an annual growth of 50 per cent.

Chief grower at Zespri, David Courtney, said this season is shaping up to be a prosperous one.

"Volume to the US will account for about 7m of the 140m trays we expect to sell globally, with sales driven by the SunGold variety," said Courtney.

"The US has been a green

market, with fruit either from Chile or California, so we see gold as the opportunity to open up the market to the different taste profile."

Speaking at the Export NZ Go Global conference in Auckland, Courtney said the US is a relatively underdeveloped market for kiwifruit, where it ranks number 21 in the overall fruit bowl. By comparison, it sits within the top 10 in both Europe and Asia.

"In more developed markets such as China and Japan, which are the Zespri's top sales generators, more sophisticated messaging is required such as the fruit's nutritional value.

In the US, Zespri tries to get people just to buy kiwifruit," explained Courtney.

Zespri hope that by targeting US consumers, it will provide a boost that will help it achieve its sales goal of NZ\$4.5bn (US\$2.87bn) by 2025.

In the 12 months ended March 31, global kiwifruit sales and licence release revenue broke the NZ\$3bn (US\$1.91m) mark for the first time.

Zespri is still finalising the commercialisation of red kiwifruit, which could be grafted by growers as early as the middle of next year if it goes ahead.