



By Gill McShane

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Peru unveils asparagus benchmark

The newly established production and post-harvest standard comes in response to new COOL labeling laws in the US



The Peruvian asparagus industry has established a new production and post-harvest standard to ensure compliance with new food and safety requirements in the US, according to the Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association (PAIA).

The norm has been developed in cooperation with FAO organisation CODEX Alimentarius Commission and is designed to help Peruvian suppliers and US importers meet new Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) regulations, which came into force on 30 September.

"PAIA has worked closely with US government agencies to advance the trade of fresh Peruvian asparagus here in the US," Priscilla

Lleras, PAIA Coordinator, said in a press statement. "We see the benefit of working together to search for new methods, technologies and strategies that will enhance the trade and ultimately benefit consumers."

Importers are already working closely with their Peruvian suppliers to ensure absolute compliance with the COOL requirements, according to John Campbell-Barmmer, marketing director at Chestnut Hill Farms and co-chairman of PAIA.

"We have placed an emphasis on the retailers needs and focused on the benefits of Peruvian asparagus, specifically, we know that Peruvian asparagus is healthy and nutritious

and will compliment any dinner table with the gourmet look," Mr Campbell-Barmmer explained.

The Peruvian asparagus industry is continuing to make significant investments in production techniques and quality control measures to ensure a continued stable supply of high quality product, according to PAIA.

In 2009, the association plans to focus even greater efforts on spreading the positive message about the benefits of Peruvian asparagus to the trade press, retailers and consumers in order to increase demand and consumption.