

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Gabrielle Easter

Wednesday 10th September 2014, 3:23 GMT

## Imported and online: Asia's fresh future

Leading experts wrapped up the 2014 Asiafruit Congress with a panel discussion on the future of Asia's fresh produce market



Left to right: Sumit Saran, Bruce Campbell and Loren Zhao at the Asiafruit Congress

**D**elegates at the Asiafruit Congress in Hong Kong were given a glimpse into the future of the fresh produce market in Asia by some of the industry's leading retailers and researchers, on 2 September.

Sumit Saran, head of international foods for Future Group India, Bruce Campbell, COO of New Zealand's Plant and Food Research and Loren Zhao, co-founder of leading Chinese e-tailer Fruitday joined Asiafruit Congress moderator Chris White on stage for the final session, 'The market of the future: Asia on the move.'

Bringing more than 14 years of retail experience, Saran of Indian retail giant Future Group, told delegates his "ten mantras" to retail success in India.

"With a consuming class of 250m-300m, of a population of 1.2bn, the food market is developing," said Sumit, adding that the food grocery market in India is growing at 10 per cent year on year.

With a growing 'aspirational' class, and 60-65 per cent of India's population under 55, Sumit said imported foods were quickly becoming more mainstream, meaning India would leap from the 12<sup>th</sup> to fifth largest food consumer by 2015.

"Imports are the fastest growing category, seeing a 300 per cent increase in the last ten years," said Sumit.

Plant and Food Research's Bruce Campbell traced a similar trend in China, where a drive towards convenience is leading to an increase in dining out. Alongside the convenience trend comes a growth in imported fresh produce, Campbell said, driven by a variety of factors including increased urbanisation, decreased food self-sufficiency and food safety concerns.

"There's a shift in thinking from individual products to mega trends in Asia," said Campbell, emphasising the opportunities in China's fresh produce

industry in coming years, including pushing new and novel uses for produce and creating a broader "health story" around imported fruit and vegetables.

"Think about the future consumers in Asia, not about the current products," Campbell told delegates.

Fruitday's Loren Zhao ended the final session of the Asiafruit Congress with a run down of some of the newer ventures his company has undertaken this year, including a focus on m-commerce as online sales via mobiles overtake sales via PCs in China.

The future, said Zhao, lies in transparency, using innovation and branding to drive online sales.

After successfully running a milestone of an online promotion with Northwest Cherry Growers and Tmall, this year Fruitday re-gained its e-commerce rule with another northwest cherry push, creating mobile apps and promotions to drive peer-to-peer marketing.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

© Copyright Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com 2014. The copyright on this article and all content published on Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com is held by Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com Limited, a joint venture between Market Intelligence Limited and Dr Rolf M Wolf Media GmbH. All rights reserved. Neither this article nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, including print-outs, screen grabs and information retrieval systems, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

FRUITNET.COM

“Ladies in China like to take selfies,” said Zhao, adding that this trend in taking photos of oneself lead to a new cherry promotion: offering Fruitday customers free cherries if they posted pictures of their lips online. Across six days, 40,000 people were interacting, more than 6m read about it; and 5,000 pictures were posted – and not all from females.

The promotions were part of the broader northwest cherry campaign to “eat and share with friends.”

Zhoa said that along with the declining use of PCs, a revolution was coming for mobile use, leading to new opportunities to develop mobile apps for online purchasing.

Ending the session, Zhao left delegates with this insight that is quickly holding true: “In China, everything happens really fast.”