United Exports Group has extended its investment in the stonefruit and blueberry categories, after buying into the Early Blue and OZ Peach businesses.

The Western Australian-based group has acquired Peter Rolfe’s share in both companies. Rolfe had previously owned and operated the two businesses in partnership with Perth-based Dave Mazzardis, who will retain his interests in both companies.

United Exports, owned and managed by Roger Horak, previously had licensing arrangements in place with both Early Blue and OZ Peach.

Oz Peach owns the rights to a number of low-chill peach and nectarine varieties, which have been licensed globally.

“These varieties are exceptionally low-chill and have proven successful in what can only be described as non-traditional stone fruit growing climates,” United Exports said in a press release. “The investment will see United further expanding the successful roll-out and establishment of these varieties across a range of new territories.”

The Early Blue programme is made up of southern highbush, evergreen blueberry varieties, which have already gained traction in markets across the globe, with production based in Australia, South Africa, Europe, Chile, Peru, Mexico and the US.

Commercialised varieties include Oz Magnifica, Oz Julieta, Oz Bella, Oz Magica and Oz Bonita.

Early Blue owns the genetics to varieties bred before and up to 2012, which United Exports said had been globally recognised as some of the best varieties currently available.

“The evergreen nature means these varieties lend themselves to successful production in warm climates, where they have proven to produce abnormal yields when compared to other varieties,” United Exports added. “Besides the adaptability and high yield of these varieties, the genius of what Dave Mazzardis has been able to achieve is that the fruit from these varieties is firm, crunchy, sweet, large in size and most importantly have very good flavor.”

The investment will further see Horak partnering with Dave and Leasa Mazzardis to release and manage varieties bred post 2012.