

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Maura Maxwell

Thursday 1st June 2017, 9:49 GMT

## Chile turns up heat in row with Zespri

The New Zealand kiwifruit marketer has called on Asoex to provide proof of accusations of monopolistic practices



Zespri CEO Lain Jager

**C**hile's long-running spat with Zespri was in the headlines once again this week after the New Zealand kiwifruit industry hit back at accusations from Asoex president Ronald Bown that it is operating a monopoly and blocking the entry of Chilean kiwifruit in Asian markets.

This prompted both Zespri and New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (NZKGI), to issue written responses refuting the claims.

CEO Lain Jager said Zespri condemned anti-competitive behaviour and is committed to acting fairly in all markets, abiding by local laws and regulations.

He noted that Bown had provided no concrete evidence to support his claims, and suggested that the variable quality of Chile's kiwifruit exports were partly to blame for its market situation.

"Mr Bown has a standing invitation to inform us immediately of any specific

matters so that we can investigate them. Over the past six years, Mr Bown has provided no details to back up these allegations nor has there been any further finding of anti-competitive behaviour against Zespri anywhere in the world," he said.

Jager continued: "Kiwifruit is a small category comprising less than 1 per cent of the highly competitive global fruit bowl. Much of the kiwifruit around the world is of variable quality, harvested immature with low dry matter and brix levels.

"Lifting fruit quality and introducing new varieties are key to growing the kiwifruit category. We note there is some very good Chilean kiwifruit in the market but its inconsistent quality undermines its positioning in the market."

NZKGI CEO Nikki Johnson said the organisation was committed to monitoring Zespri's practices to ensure that it operates within the law.

"Representatives of NZKGI recently visited Chile and met with representatives of the Chilean industry to confirm our role in monitoring Zespri," she said.

"A commitment was made to the Chilean industry that any information that they have regarding Zespri's performance or behaviour in markets would be investigated by NZKGI as an independent party.

"As yet, no information has been received to enable NZKGI to undertake any investigations but we reiterate our commitment to ensuring that Zespri is operating appropriately.