

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Maura Maxwell

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## Argentina sends first cherries to China



Eight containers bound for Guangzhou left Patagonia by truck on Monday to be shipped via Chile

**T**he first ever consignment of Argentine cherries is on its way to China following the opening of the market at the end of 2018.

Eight containers carrying 160 tonnes of cherries grown in Río Negro, Neuquén and Chubut, left by truck on Monday bound for Chile, from where they will be shipped via the ports of Valparaíso and San Antonio to Guangzhou.

Anibál Caminiti, manager of the Argentine Chamber of Integrated Cherry Producers, hailed the shipment as a “monumental event for the valleys of northern Patagonia”.

“These first exports, that will depart by sea, are being monitored by Chinese phytosanitary technicians who will endorse the protocol for the last time,” he said.

“From then on, all subsequent exports to China will be made automatically without the need for technicians to be present.”

The phytosanitary protocol was signed at the end of November during a bilateral meeting between president Mauricio Macri and Chinese premier Xi Jinping held under the auspices of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires.

The Chinese market represents a huge opportunity for Argentina, thanks to its strong demand for fresh cherries and the high prices that good quality fruit can achieve, which can help to offset the high production costs which plague Argentine growers.

However, the country’s export potential is limited due to the requirement for the cherries to be subjected to a 15-day cold treatment period because Patagonia is not recognised by the Chinese as a fruit fly free zone.

This significantly narrows Argentina’s commercial window as it means that shipments have to be treated prior to export if being sent by air, or during transit if going by sea. In both cases this

increases costs for exporters and prevents them from reaching the market during the crucial early window when prices are highest.

Caminiti said he was confident that Patagonia would be declared free of fruit fly following a planned visit by Chinese inspectors in March.

“We are confident that by the end of this year Patagonia will be exporting its cherries by plane, enabling producers to achieve prices far higher than those achieved after the Chinese New Year,” he said.

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

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