

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox: The future of fresh vegetables



Photo: Orlova Maria

Guaranteeing provenance and traceability will be key to unlocking new demand, says Chris Groot of Enza Zaden

Chris Groot is produce chain manager at breeding company Enza Zaden, one of only a handful of companies around the world that is developing the vegetables of tomorrow.

As he explains in the latest edition of Fruitbox, Fruitnet's series of conversations with leading members of the international fresh produce business, the outlook for these companies looks bright, especially with more and more consumers seeking out healthier and more nutritious diets.

However, there are major challenges too in creating new products to satisfy that demand. In particular, developing new varieties that meet the requirements of consumers, retailers and growers alike means the whole process is far more complicated these days.

"Twenty years ago it was all about the grower traits, but now you see that the number of traits we look at before we bring a product to market is way bigger than in the past," says Groot.

The recent success of a product like kale, which has been embraced by a new generation of health-conscious consumers, bodes well for the vegetable business but also means the bar is set much higher for companies like Enza Zaden.

Higher nutrient content will be important, but actually guaranteeing provenance and traceability is going to be key to unlocking new demand, Groot adds. "We think it's more about awareness in relation to origin. More and more consumers want to know where the product is coming from, where it was produced, what kind of chemicals did growers use."

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in twice a week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis.

Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

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