

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



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## AFPA calls for greater support in export markets

Australian body wants technical trade barriers for fresh produce exports removed to diversify grower opportunities



Chief executive of AFPA, Michael Rogers

Members of the Australian Fresh Produce Alliance (AFPA) are calling for a renewed focus on negotiating technical market access protocols for fresh produce to key export markets including Japan and South Korea.

According to a release from AFPA, recent tensions with China have re-enforced the need to enhance technical market access for a range of horticulture's key export markets to better enable farmers to diversify their markets and manage their risk.

AFPA chief executive Michael Rogers (pictured right) said alliance members welcomed the recent work undertaken by the federal government in securing the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, but there remained more to do.

"Markets like India present a much longer-term opportunity for most horticulture exporters," noted Rogers.

AFPA highlighted the costs Australian horticulture producers face, among the highest in the world, as a key reason why they require access to export markets that offer a high value return to growers.

"Markets like Japan and South Korea have an appreciation for the high quality of Australian fresh produce and present strong opportunities for export growth," AFPA noted in a statement.

Rogers spoke of the success Australian fruit and vegetable exporters have experienced in the Japanese market on a number of key product lines.

"Table grapes and citrus were valued at A\$53m and A\$69m respectively in 2019. The industry would like to build on the success of these products but require the government to undertake further negotiations to establish technical access," he explained.

Industries seeking new or expanded access to the high value Japanese market include mango, table grape, citrus, avocado and blueberries.

There have been previous calls by AFPA for the Australian government to investigate a Japan-Australia food security agreement.

The agreement would aim to provide Japan with greater certainty around its food imports, while providing Australian farmers with increased demand, in turn creating jobs, income for regional communities and greater export income for Australia.

"Japan is one of the world's largest net food importers. Australian growers are experiencing fluctuating demand domestically due to Covid-19 and increasing production volumes due to previous plantings. Enhancing our trading relationship with Japan just makes good sense, and the negotiation of technical access for products such as avocados and blueberries should be prioritised," said Rogers.

Chief executive of Perfection Fresh, and chair of AFPA, Michael Simonetta, said

there was a clear opportunity for Australian fresh produce in Japan, noting they were often fielding requests from customers seeking citrus, grapes, blueberries and a variety of vegetables.

“To capitalise on export opportunities, we have recently expanded and have located an office in Hong Kong to service our increasing base of export customers,” said Simonetta.

“We have built strong, long term trading relationships with our Japanese customers and would welcome being able to introduce them to a wider range of our products including blueberries and mangoes.

“Perfection Fresh’s view, and that of the other members of the AFPA is that fresh produce growth

will be in export. Overall, domestic consumption in Australia is stagnant, for us to really grow our business, greater technical market access to reliable trading partners like Japan and South Korea is necessary,” he added.