

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Chris Komorek

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Manbulloo trials jackfruit in NT

Leading mango producer plants jackfruit in Katherine, with selections developed by NT Department of Primary Industry



Jackfruit grown in Northern Territory by Tropical Primary Products

Manbulloo, Australia's largest grower of Kensington Pride and R2E2 mangoes, has announced the planting of 100 jackfruit trees on one of its properties near Katherine in Australia's Northern Territory.

The move signifies the company's intention to diversify its offering, with managing director Marie Piccone telling ABC Rural the plantings will give them an insight into the growing and marketing viability of jackfruit in Australia.

"We'll be measuring a whole lot of attributes, including time from planting to the first crop, annual yield, consumer acceptance and post-harvest shelf life," explained Piccone.

"We will use that criteria to have a look at whether we could tick it off as feasible and then have a look at the economics."

Jackfruit, which has the ability to weigh in excess of 40kg, can be eaten at two stages in its growth; the younger fruit can be cooked, while the more mature fruit can be eaten fresh.

Younger jackfruit is growing in popularity as a meat alternative for vegetarian and vegan consumers.

Piccone said Manbulloo would consider the potential for both markets for jackfruit.

"We don't really know [what the market demand is], but we do believe that there's probably potential for both the products," she said.

"Both are used extensively in Asia and other tropical regions. This is a really, really early-stage crop in Australia."

The trees Manbulloo planted were developed by the NT's Department of Primary Industry (DPI). Researcher Mark Hoult has been working on jackfruit selections from across the Darwin region, propagating them at the Coastal Plains research station, for a number of years.

According to ABC Rural, four selections from that orchard have been planted at Manbulloo's farm.

Hoult said it was great to see a larger trial of jackfruit in the Katherine region.

"It's encouraging to have a large, national company keen to improve the crop and see if the prospects are there for growers," he said.

"I think Marie Piccone's company are pretty astute growers and marketers of products, so it will be good in terms of having that overlay at looking at this material from a large commercial context."

The DPI is hoping to sign-off on a new project, partnering with Monash University's Food Development Hub, to look at new food products.

"We hope to link in the newer [jackfruit] genetics with the potential products that the Monash University team might be able to develop," explained Hoult.

"There's a lot of interest in the vegan and vegetarian product development area, and jackfruit is often used as a pulled pork-substitute; it's quite a versatile product."

Tropical Primary Products is one of the Northern Territory's leading jackfruit producers based outside of Darwin, with its fruit (pictured) sold domestically across Australia.

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

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