Mr Schmidt told the Santiago Times he will work to diversify Chile's exports to China, and that he sees benefits in exporting more fruit there.

Currently, 83 per cent of trade between China and Chile is in the mining industry, while agriculture and food exports account for only 1 per cent and 3.8 per cent, respectively, the newspaper reported.

Mr Schmidt's previous experience with Fedefruta positions him well to help increase exports of fruit and agricultural produce to China.

In his former role with the fruit growers' association, he traveled to China more than 20 times during the 1990s, and in a partnership between the two governments, he helped install a demonstration farm near Beijing, bolstering relations between the countries.

He also told the Santiago Times more work needs to be done to increase Chinese investment in Chile.

Last year, Chile invested US$120m in China, whereas China invested only US$85m in Chile.

Mr Schmidt said he also hopes to find a way to increase the number of small and medium-sized Chilean businesses entering the Chinese market.