



By Matthew Jones

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## Zespri forecasts strong European returns



Volumes in line with last year's record crop, as production ramps up across the continent

With the 2019 Northern Hemisphere kiwifruit harvest well underway, Zespri is expecting to market around 19m trays – or almost 70,000 tonnes – from orchards throughout Italy, France and Greece.

"It's been a tough season for some European growers this year, with a cold wet spring negatively affecting pollination and issues including the presence of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug and Moira disease affecting kiwifruit and other local produce," said Sheila McCann-Morrison, Zespri's chief international production officer.

"However, despite those challenges, this season's Northern Hemisphere crop is still expected to be around the same as the record set last year. That's going to mean we can again provide strong returns to the local industry which is something we're very proud of."

Zespri has developed a network of around 750 European growers over the past 20 years, the majority of which are

based in Italy. With growing global demand for kiwifruit, McCann-Morrison said European production plays a key role in the marketer's global supply strategy, which supplies premium fruit for all 12 months of the year.

"It's a relationship that's working incredibly well for both Italian growers, post-harvest operators and distributors, as well as for Zespri and the New Zealand industry," McCann-Morrison said.

"It's helping deliver greater orchard gate returns, jobs for locals and is also leading to tens-of-millions of Euros being invested in orchards and post-harvest facilities. It's also helping foster further collaboration including technical exchange through R&D, grower workshops and nursery visits in New Zealand and other general support – all of which are helping boost production."

Zespri is involved in a number of trials to help European growers overcome the threats posed by pests and disease.

"Brown Marmorated Stink Bug is having

a huge impact on European crops including kiwifruit and so we're working with locals to address this threat, as well as continuing to invest significantly with our partners on mitigating the impact of the vine-killing disease Psa," McCann-Morrison added.

"Our industry knows first-hand the risks associated with biosecurity and the significant costs associated with an incursion - if we can find ways to reduce the impact then the benefits will be immense."

McCann-Morrison said improving market access for European kiwifruit is also a significant focus for Zespri, as production ramps-up across the continent.

"Global supply, or Zespri kiwifruit grown outside of New Zealand, is currently around 10 per cent of all the fruit sold internationally by Zespri, but that will increase significantly along with demand," she said.

"At the moment we have around 3,100ha

in the ground in Europe and that's set to grow to around 5,000ha over the next five years.

"We're committed to helping create access to new markets for

European exporters as we have recently with Mexico so we're ensuring an even greater number of consumers around the world can access our premium kiwifruit."

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

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