

The international marketing magazine for fresh produce buyers in Europe



By Liam O'Callaghan

Tuesday 10th December 2019, 23:33 GMT

Australian potatoes explore Egypt



Vaughan Carter, chair of Potato Growers Association of WA

Western Australian delegation visits Egypt to assess export potential for seed potatoes

A trade delegation including Western Australian (WA) potato industry leaders toured Egypt in November, confirming the potential to export at least 10,000 tonnes of seed potatoes.

The delegation focused on connecting with commercial operators at all levels of the Egyptian supply chain involved in potato crisp processing. This visit followed a 2017 visit, which identified the market as having significant potential for WA seed potato exports.

Vaughan Carter, chair of Potato Growers Association of WA, joined the tour which included meetings with three of the largest crisp processors in Egypt - PepsiCo, Egypt Food Group and Americana (Senyorita) Foods.

"The Egyptian potato sector is enormous, producing over 5m tonnes annually. As a result, over 150,000 tonnes of certified seed are imported each year from United Kingdom and European suppliers, and the market is still growing," said Vaughan.

"Our visit confirmed the potential we identified in 2017 and provided a much better understanding of how the industry works, including where WA seed potatoes could be competitive and even provide benefit to the Egyptian industry.

"Key supply chain participants in Egypt have shown initial support for trial shipments to evaluate WA seed potatoes in-market. We are looking forward to working closely with Egyptian Quarantine in order to make this happen" said Vaughan.

According to Simon Moltoni, chief executive of Potato Growers Association of WA, the biggest challenge for WA seed growers will be to gain market access through an Australian and Egyptian government to government agreement.

This process commenced in 2017, but significant work is still required to progress the phytosanitary and varietal

issues before the agreement can be established.

"We are confident that WA's globally recognised biosecurity status for seed potatoes, that meet and exceed the import protocol cited in official decrees published by Egypt for European seed, along with our counter-seasonal supply, will assist us to gain access in due course," said Simon.

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

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