



By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox: New ways to sell fresh produce in Asia



Fruitnet's John Hey reflects on some dramatic changes to the way fruit and veg are bought and sold in the region

John Hey knows the Asian fresh produce market like the back of his hand. As editorial director for Fruitnet in Asia, he's seen some major changes to the way the market – or that collection of extremely varied markets – works, particularly in the past six months as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

"The pandemic has really been a catalyst for change in shopping behaviour," he tells Chris White during the latest episode of Fruitnet's conversation series Fruitbox. "Wet markets have been heavily impacted by Covid restrictions, like social distancing and shorter operating hours, and some consumers have stayed away due to hygiene and food safety fears."

Modern retail formats like supermarkets have certainly benefited from that shift, but Hey believes the most significant growth is elsewhere. "The headline trend we've seen is online and digital channels

growing their share of fresh produce sales," he notes. "Pre-pandemic, China was already blazing a trail in the digitalisation of food retail with the integration of online and offline, but Covid has really accelerated the trend there."

Plus there have been other interesting developments in other parts of the supply chain, including producers and importers developing their own innovative and ingenious ways of reaching consumers. "That's a trend I think that we will likely see grow."

During this specially extended episode of Fruitbox, Hey takes us through a whistlestop tour of Asian markets, summing up the various trends, challenges and opportunities that exist for fresh fruit and vegetable suppliers and buyers.

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Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in every week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis.

Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

To find out how you can tell your story on Fruitbox, email chris@fruitnet.com.

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