

Britain's favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895



By Michael Barker

Wednesday 21st November 2018, 12:43 GMT

Cherries 'must focus on quality'

Norton Folgate's Matt Hancock says cherry category has great potential if it focuses on quality and overcomes price perception

The cherry category has huge opportunity for growth, but only if it overcomes negative consumer perceptions of price and puts the focus firmly on quality, a leading supplier has claimed.

Matt Hancock, managing director of Norton Folgate, told the Fruitnet Forum South-East Europe in Belgrade that the biggest problem facing cherries is consumers' perception that it is an expensive product. Citing the fact that the trend is to sell in more expensive small pack sizes rather than economical larger formats, he said work needs to be done to shift public attitudes.

That could come through a focus on quality, he added. "In order to defend a good price point we need to stop selling inferior fruit, stop growing 22mm fruit," he said.

Other consumer issues include stalk colour, a complete lack of public understanding of varieties, and the fact that cherries are almost always a spontaneous purchase.

In cherries' favour are their "great health credentials", suitability as a snack and the fact they tie into consumer trends for convenience, he added.

Hancock also highlighted the huge opportunity for exporting to China, where cherries are well regarded as the colour red is considered lucky, the fruit is likened to a woman's lips, beauty and youth, and imported fruit is considered healthy, safe and luxurious.



Matt Hancock, speaking in Belgrade