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By Mike Knowles

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First seedless lychees grown in Australia

As the country pushes for market access to China and the US, one grower has bred a potentially lucrative new variety



Tibby Dixon with some of his seedless lychees. Photo: Camilleri's Farm Market

An Australian grower has reportedly grown the country's first seedless lychees following almost two decades of development, something which could in theory bolster the fruit's commercial opportunities both on the domestic market and abroad.

As revealed by ABC News, Queensland-based grower Tibby Dixon harvested the first few kilos after 19 years spent breeding the fruit selectively.

"Within a couple of years we should have enough to sell out in commercial numbers," commented Dixon.

Seedless lychees are not entirely new and have been available in comparatively small volumes in China for some time, but the vast majority of lychees sold around the globe are seeded.

According to the Australian Lychee Growers Association (ALGA), the country has the longest lychee production season in the world, producing fruit from late October to late March.

This coincides with the Lunar New Year, which is why growers and exporters are keen for Australia to secure access to the potentially lucrative Chinese market.

The industry is also targeting access the US market by 2021.

"If export opportunities to the United States are realised and market access to China is obtained, demand could significantly outstrip current production," says a recent report published by ALGA.

"To ensure the industry can reliably deliver product to these markets, it is expected that production will need to increase by 50 per cent by 2021," it adds.

"To achieve this level of growth there will be a need for productivity improvements, additional tree planting and the attraction of new growers to the industry."

Lychee-growing regions in Australia include the tropical far north Queensland, central Queensland, south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales.

Increasing domestic demand is also a key goal for the industry. The bulk of its lychee production is sold locally, but around 20-35 per cent is exported. Most are consumed in the cities of Sydney and Melbourne.

ALGA says more than 40 varieties of lychee are currently grown in the country, although only seven varieties are sold in significant commercial volume: Kwai May Pink, Tai So, Fay Zee

Siu, Souey Tung, Kaimana, Salathiel and

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

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