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By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox 58 - Ruth McLennan, Dairy Farm Group



The retailer's commercial director for south-east Asia explains how Asia's fresh produce market is changing

Even in Asia, a market with a deserved reputation for being at the cutting edge of grocery ecommerce, the past year has seen major advances in the development of this new retail arena.

That's the view of Ruth McLennan, commercial director for south-east Asia at Dairy Farm, one of Asia's largest food retailers with annual sales of more than US\$12bn.

"Like all markets, the pandemic has brought online to the forefront for both customers and retailers alike," she tells Chris White in the latest episode of Fruitnet's weekly conversation series Fruitbox.

"In Asia, the progress is mixed. Some markets have established online businesses and some others are quite new to the arena. Online is very progressed in Hong Kong, China and

Singapore, so in some of our other markets, such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia, this channel has seen a meteoric rise as customers shift their shopping habits."

With growth in online grocery shopping as high as 20 per cent in some of those countries, there have been rapid changes to the food retail landscape, McLennan says.

"What's also interesting is the move from the wet markets to online, as they were closed during the height of the pandemic."

The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of supply chains, and maintaining supply of the freshest products for customers, she adds.

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.

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