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By Matthew Jones

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Global suppliers show faith in China

Leading exporters confident Asian nation can lead new charge for global fresh produce business

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic hasn't diminished global suppliers' faith in the China market, nor has it drastically curtailed demand for imported fresh produce among the country's consumers.

Speaking at last week's Fruitnet Live: China event, George Liu, founder of B2B fresh produce distributor-marketer Frutacloud, said increasing health consciousness among Chinese consumers is providing an opportunity to boost fresh produce consumption.

According to Liu, consistency and reliability will be the keys to capturing this opportunity for international players.

"Obviously, procurement teams [from China] aren't travelling internationally due to the travel bans," Liu explained. "It means they are reliant on third party inspectors. It will be a big test of trust between suppliers, importers and consumers."

International trade disruptions over the opening half of 2020 have been a boon for China's domestic fruit trade, according to Liu.

Charif Christian Carvajal, director of marketing for Europe, Asia and the Middle East at the Chilean Fruit Exporters Association (Asoex), saw the rising popularity of domestic fruit in the China market as a positive.

"We've seen it happen in other markets before and it's had a positive impact. It gets consumers buying year-round, helping drive sales when our fruit is in market," Carvajal said.

Ben McLeod, global sales and marketing manager of New Zealand apple exporter Mr Apple, said forecasting the level of demand from China from week-to-week has been a challenge this season. However, he remained optimistic about the prospects for the future.

"In the past, the China market has



Clockwise from top left: Fruitnet managing director Chris White, Frutacloud's George Liu, San Miguel Global's Alejandro Lucas, Mr Apple's Ben McLeod and Asoex's Charif Christian Carvajal during Fruitnet Live: China

demonstrated it can react quickly," McLeod explained. "If there's any country I trust to rebound it's China."

Alejandro Lucas, commercial director of San Miguel Global, shared this optimism, saying his company hopes to ship 15 per cent of its citrus crop to China within the coming years, up from 6 per cent at the current time.

More key insights from Fruitnet Live: China will be published on Fruitnet over the coming days. A full round-up of the event will appear in the upcoming July-August edition of Asiafruit.

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

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