



By Matthew Jones

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Consumers shell-out for Australian macadamias



Steep spike in sales over 2014, as industry benefits from extended production window

Favourable production conditions and strong international demand have led to a surge in Australian macadamia sales over 2014.

Figures released by the Australian Macadamia Society (AMS) indicate that in-shell sales increased by 124 per cent to 11,200 tonnes over 2014. Kernel sales also improved on the previous season, coming in at 9500 tonnes.

Australia's total in-shell crop volume was 43,600 tonnes, an increase of 24 per cent on the 2013 season.

AMS chief executive Jolyon Burnett said good pricing in both domestic and export markets, along with a comparatively long harvest, led to the higher than expected crop size.

"There was an early start to the season and a long tail, with many growers only completing harvest in late November," Burnett explained. "Because there was

minimal wet weather, growers were able to continually harvest throughout the season unimpeded by rain. Good prices made it more profitable for growers to conduct an additional 'late harvest' pick-up, and therefore a very high percentage of the total crop has been harvested overall."

Burnett said the macadamia category continued to benefit from rising consumer awareness of the product. "Overall, global demand remains strong and is not showing any signs of slowing down," he said.

The Australian industry will look to increase its presence in markets across the globe, with a particular focus on Asia. Burnett said the Chinese market was particularly appealing, with the announcement of the Australia-China free trade agreement set to see the removal of a 24 per cent tariff on Australian macadamias over a five year period.

China is already the industry's largest trading partner, absorbing 27 per cent of Australia's annual macadamia crop.

"This is not the beginning of our journey into this market, it's another significant step," Burnett said. "Currently the Chinese market is 'in-shell' although we are exploring the opportunities to value-add."