

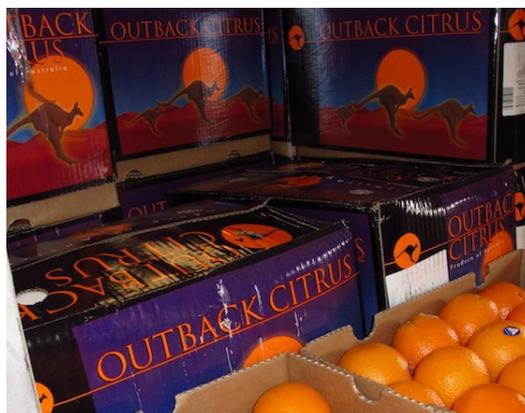


By Fruitnet.com Staff

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## Australia-China access deal ratified

Trade can now commence under improved protocols for the export of Australian cherries, stonefruits, table grapes and citrus



**E**xporting of some stonefruits, citrus, cherries and table grapes from Australia to China will now become easier and faster under a series of new protocols ratified today (12 January).

The finalisation of the protocols comes after [proposed changes to the Manual of Importing Country Requirements \(MICoR\)](#) were announced in November 2017. The amendments included approval for different modes of transit for fresh fruit including air and seafreight, which had previously been excluded for certain varieties.

Exporters will still have to wait for approval to send fruit under the new protocols as import permits still need to be issued.

### Table Grapes

For the table grape industry, changes mean access to airfreight with fumigated fruit. Industry members suggest this will

expand their reach into inland areas and tier two cities.

“This is a game changer because it will open up a whole new market in China for our growers and they’ll be able to deliver to market after only four days,” said Australian Table Grapes Association chief executive Jeff Scott prior to ratification.

Scott said there would be significant benefits for the table grape industry in light of the new protocol.

“In two of three years, once fumigation facilities are in place and growers know how to manage the protocol, I think it could add another A\$80-100m worth of exports,” he said.

### Citrus

Key benefits for Australian citrus exporters include recognition of South Australia’s Riverland as a pest free area, approval of cold disinfestation at 3°C,

and a relaxation of the field control measures for certain pests.

“This will provide benefits to both sides of the trade. Fruit will undoubtedly arrive in better condition with better out-turn quality and shelf life and reduce the costs of supply,” explained David Daniels, market access manager at Citrus Australia.

“Ultimately, it means that we can continue to supply Chinese consumers with high quality fruit at affordable prices.”

### Stonefruit

For the stonefruit industry, the deal will extend access beyond nectarines to include peaches, plums and apricots. The protocol includes low-dose methyl bromide fumigation of peaches, which allows fruit to be airfreighted.

“We’re also completing efficacy trials for low-dose methyl bromide on plums and

apricots, with the hope of getting airfreight-friendly protocols for those products next year,” said John Moore, CEO of Summerfruit Australia.

Exporters must attain a Chinese import permit before sending their first consignments of fruit, a process which can take two or three weeks to complete.

Regardless, Australian peach suppliers remain confident they will receive the green light to start airfreight shipments in time for the all-important Chinese New Year trading period.

## Cherries

The deal arguably represents the most significant market access win to date for Australia’s cherry industry.

Along with recognising a number of cherry production hubs as pest free areas, growers on the Australian mainland will be able to send their fruit directly to China via airfreight for the first time.

The protocol requires all mainland cherries grown outside recognised pest free areas to undergo methyl bromide treatment prior to export.

“We would love a non-treatment or irradiation protocol, and we will continue to campaign for improved market access, but we can make it work with methyl bromide,” said Cherry Growers Australia (CGA) chief executive Tom Eastlake. “We will see shipments under this protocol for sure.”