



By Liam O'Callaghan

Thursday 29th August 2019, 3:15 GMT

Kyoho grapes arrive in Australia

First shipment is the culmination of three years of work for Thanh Truong from Aus Asia Produce



Australian consumers now have access to some of Asia's most premium fruit, with the first shipment of Kyoho grapes from South Korea landing in Melbourne.

Their arrival comes with great excitement for Thanh Truong, director of Aus Asia Produce. The company has been working for three years to organise suppliers and prepare for the protocol, which was approved on 30 January 2019.

"After looking at other varieties we identified an opportunity with Kyoho. I'm really excited to see them here after three years of work," Truong said.

Kyoho grapes are considered a premium product and are often purchased as gifts for special occasions, according to Truong. He said it was important to evaluate the demand for this specific use among Asian communities in Australia before deciding to import the fruit.

"We primarily service the Asian consumer demographic here in

Melbourne and across Australia. It's not just Korean and Chinese consumers, it's also Vietnamese and some of the other demographics too. I realised if you combine the Chinese and the Korean communities you can really start to get some volume," explained Truong.

"With the Kyoho it's a premium product. I mean we are looking at doing A\$40 per kg on the punnet, so that's retail price of A\$20 for our 500gm punnets. That's why we're looking into marketing."

In addition to selling the punnets, Aus Asia Produce offers the grapes in larger gift boxes to further tailor the product to its target market, a necessity for a product at this price point.

"If you are going to be spending this amount of money on a piece of fruit it has to have more than just its nutrition and taste value. It has to have a cultural meaning to it, so I had to work out our clientele," Truong explained.

"We had to look at certain price points

that would work for our client base but also when to sell them. Right now, we are right before the Chinese mid-autumn festival and Chuseok, the 'Korean thanksgiving', on 13 September. We're hopefully going to bring in more containers before then to support that community."

Aus Asia Produce's preparation for the arrival of the Kyoho grapes also extends to how they will be sold. Truong said the company pre-sold the majority of its first shipment.

He has forecast 80 per cent of the product will be sold online. Many of the grapes will be sold direct to customers through online platforms such as WeChat.

Kyoho grapes will not be the last addition to Aus Asia Produce's Asian import portfolio, which now features more than 10 lines from a range of countries. However, Truong said whatever comes next will require the same level of preparation to ensure the best produce is arriving in Australia.

"Every year there seems to be another

here in Australia, that certainly has been

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opportunity," he said. "Even though a protocol might open it doesn't mean it is viable to trade the product

the case for many different lines."

This article originally appeared in the Spring edition of Produce Plus Magazine, out now.

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