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Australia gives India ok for pomegranates

Australia has recommended the import of Indian pomegranates and arils subject to biosecurity requirements



India is closer to gaining access to Australia for its pomegranates after a biosecurity report recommended allowing imports, subject to India meeting requirements.

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, commenced its risk analysis of whole, fresh pomegranates and ready-to-eat arils from India on 31 July 2018 and released a draft report from consultation on 18 October 2019. The final report, released on 26 June 2020, considers the comments received from stakeholders.

For whole, fresh pomegranate, the final report identified 13 pests associated that require risk management measures to reduce the biosecurity risk to an acceptable level.

It recommended measures, such as area freedom or cold treatment for fruit flies, be combined with an operational system, to manage biosecurity risks to achieve the appropriate level of protection for Australia.

For processed arils, three fruit fly pests were identified, and the report recommends area freedom, a systems approach approved by the Department or fruit treatment. Processed arils must also comply with Australia's food safety requirements.

Before imports can commence, import conditions will need to be published and Australia will need to verify India can meet said conditions. Then permits need to be granted to importers who meet the conditions.

Speaking to Asiafruit in November 2019, Pankaj Khandelwal, managing director of leading Indian packer-exporter INI Farms, said India is well placed to supply the Australian market as October to April is the peak period for pomegranate production, while Australia's season tends to peak between April and September.

Kaushal Khakhar, chief executive of Kay Bee Exports, was also excited about the opportunities for its fresh-cut arils,

which are already shipped to neighbouring New Zealand, and have been building a strong following in European markets.

"Australia already produces pomegranates and consumption is increasing, so I do see good potential for us as counter-seasonal suppliers," Khakhar told Asiafruit.

"From what I gather, the US is the only supply country with access [to Australia] at the moment, so we should be able to do some good work to grow the market there."

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