

China taking a bite of Aussie nectarines for the first time

“Australian nectarines will be the first nectarines any country has been able to export to the Chinese market. This access will help drive demand and opportunity for the high-quality summerfruit Australian growers are known to produce.”

Horticulture Innovation Australia
Chief Executive Officer,
John Lloyd

With Queensland fruit fly a key barrier to getting Australian summerfruit into important international markets, Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation) funding has helped develop a new disinfection approach – a technique that has played a role in the new protocol allowing Australian summerfruit access to China for the very first time.

ISSUE

Market access is an issue of highest priority for the Australian summerfruit industry, with the maintenance and growth of international markets key to securing the industry's future. But the presence of the Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) is an impediment to trade.

While Qfly disinfection protocols do exist for access to some countries, there has been no market access-protocol in place to allow Australian summerfruit entry into the large and vital Chinese market.

SOLUTION

A number of projects, contributors and coordinated, long-term efforts have secured access to China for Australian nectarines, with the market-access protocol being informed by Hort-Innovation-funded research into low-dose methyl bromide fumigation of the fruit.

While the use of methyl bromide fumigation is not new, the low-dose concept is. The lower concentrations of fumigant applied for longer treatment times to ensure efficacy against Qfly without compromising fruit quality. The treatment is easy and relatively inexpensive to apply, and will facilitate trade using both air-freight and sea-freight transport.

RESULTS

The signing of the commercially viable protocol for the entry of Australian nectarines into mainland China was announced in May 2016. This is the first international protocol that uses low-dose methyl bromide and this is the first time any country has had access to export nectarines to China.

These treatments require the core temperature of the fruit be maintained at between 0 and 2°C for durations of 13 to 22 days, which growers and exporters have indicated can be economically unfeasible as a land-based treatment, and which is unsuitable for peaches, which are sensitive to cold and unable to withstand these long treatments.

With a great time advantage over cold treatment, the fumigation approach makes air freight feasible, in turn allowing the export of Australian summerfruit to be much more flexible and responsive.



MARKET ACCESS, INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Market intelligence and market access
power demand for Australian food and fibre

