


Chile's prune export values have taken a leap in recent times, putting the product on par with its fresh plum counterpart, according to a report released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 

Figures from Chile's Office of Agricultural Studies and Policy (ODEPA) show the country shipped 59,966 metric tons (MT) in 2011, representing growth of 30%.

These exports were worth US\$112.3 million and reached 74 countries.

Production is expected to grow by 20% year-on-year to hit a record level of 78,000MT in 2012, while the industry is forecasting a volume of 90,000MT in 2015.

The USDA report said that as 98% of Chilean prunes are sent abroad, the remaining 2% was not sufficient to generate significant domestic demand. This meant that in the medium term, production would exceed consumption and therefore the industry would need to look for ways to raise local interest.

The report highlighted it was expected export markets would grow, with China alone set to raise its prune demand by 130,000MT in the coming years.

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