

Although phytosanitary norms are still in negotiation, authorities have entered the final stages to bring fresh Peruvian asparagus to Chinese consumers, Peruvian Asapargus and Vegetable Institute director Carlos Zamorano told www.freshfruitportal.com. 

"We've been working very hard with SENASA (National Agricultural Health Service), which is key to open doors to these markets. They came to our fields, visited our processing plants and already sent over the protocol. Some comments have been made and in a month or two, we'll be ready and we'll know to an exact science the conditions under which we will enter the Chinese market," Zamorano said.

China may be the world's top producer, but better Peruvian quality has motivated China to open a market window. Zamorano explained that cold storage problems in China have created an opportunity for fresh asparagus.

"They work mostly with the product for canning, since there are land ownership problems in China and distinct production methods that do not allow for outstanding quality," he said.

The first shipments will measure consumer response and lead into the positioning phase, which will include participation in fairs and commercial offices in Shanghai and Beijing.

Export commission Promperú will help IPEH on the commercial end and generate market studies once the doors are officially open.

"We've already asked Promperú to make a market calendar of China to see which are the most attractive and evaluate them," Zamorano said.

Beyond China, he said Peru could soon forge a commercial alliance with New Zealand and lock down a free trade agreement with India.

The main asparagus market for Peru is currently the United States with 70% participation.

"It has taken many years to win our position in the U.S. What I can foresee is a possible re-launch and growth of varieties to serve the Chinese market," he said.

"With China, there is always mystery. Many things can change. You have to look at the transportation conditions, costs and revenue. But having a market of this magnitude can definitely change things."

Today Peru exports 112,000 tons (MT) of fresh asparagus worldwide, generating US\$325 million.



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