

While Chile's kiwifruit industry is aiming for a 70% rise on this year's exports with a volume of 170,000 metric tons (MT) in 2015, the situation is not all smooth sailing with many challenges ahead. 

The significant change is mainly due to the fact the 2014 crop was much smaller due to impacts from frosts in September last year, prompting price rises of between US\$3-6 per carton.

In a release, Chilean Kiwifruit Committee president Carlos Cruzat said that event would likely have a lagging effect with lower fertility in vines, adding to some impacts from bacterial disease Psa - now present in a [new part of the country](#) - and lighter frosts that occurred recently in October.

The representative added many orchards had been taken out of production as well due to "mediocre results" over the last five years.

Breeding programs and ripening at destination are two key challenges for next year, according to Cruzat, whose committee aims to give greater support to retail chains and importers so they can better understand the required logistics and technology to achieve optimal consumption levels.

He said Europe was currently the main market for Chilean kiwifruit, with around 50% of the export share and strong sales channels for the kiwifruit sizes grown in the South American country.

"What has happened from the year 2000 to date is that there has been better logistics within Europe and that's meant that it [the kiwifruit] arrives directly in countries like Italy, Russia or Poland, sometimes skipping the warehousing, sales and distribution that was done before in the Netherlands."

He said industry would need to continue working on ripening programs in the old continent, as these initiatives added value to fruit and helped raise rotation rates and prices.

"European supermarkets are increasingly asking for fruit to arrive pre-conditioned to be available on the shelves in such a way that consumers can take packs of 4-6 units to their homes."

Cruzat said growth potential was good in other markets like China, Latin America and the U.S., with the latter likely to play host to special pre-conditioning campaigns.

"We think that ripe fruit has great growth potential in that market," Cruzat said, adding the committee also aimed to increase the amount of varieties in Chile through breeding efforts between the Universidad de Chile and Italy's Università di Udine.

The committee emphasized that while Chile's development of the disease had been much slower than in other parts of the world like New Zealand and Italy, it "continued to be a serious disease that requires monitoring to limit growth across the planted surface area".

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