

A Chilean delegation recently visited Portugal's leading cherry-growing region to assist the industry in establishing a strategy to penetrate the Chinese market.

Spanish news publication *Agencia EFE* said the delegation travelled to the city of Fundao, where they met with researchers, growers and business owners.

Cherry demand has risen greatly in China over recent years and has led to high prices. Perhaps a good demonstration of this is when Chilean President Michelle Bachelet visited the Asian country and was asked by a Chinese journalist if "it would be possible to lower the price a bit for the cherries that China imports?"

Chile has around 25,000 hectares of cherry production and an average output of around 130,000 metric tons (MT) annually, of which 80% is shipped to China, according to the article.

Sales prices can occasionally reach up to 6 euros per kilogram, and further increases can be seen during the Chinese New Year celebrations.

The mayor of Fundao, Paulo Fernandes, said the aim of the visit was to "establish alliances between producers or researchers from universities of both countries to improve the systems of export and production."

He added the visit was effectively the first phase, and a Portuguese delegation would soon head to Chile to see the production sites.

High on the priority list for Portugal is also obtaining a cherry variety with high disease resistance and a good post harvest life.

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