

While the fast-growing Colombian avocado industry eagerly awaits a final decision on a proposed rule to allow imports in the USA, movements are underway for exporting to another potentially lucrative market - China.

In an announcement earlier this week, the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) said authorities from China confirmed they would be sending a delegation very soon to visit Colombia's main Hass avocado production areas with the aim of completing a risk evaluation process.

ICA reported the delegation would also set out to determine requirements for starting negotiations for allowing imports of the fruit into their country.

"This good news is the result of several years of work that are starting to bear fruit, and the idea is that in late September there will be a commission verifying and visiting our crops," ICA managing director Luis Humberto Martínez Lacouture said in a release.

"ICA does what is required so that Hass avocado growers in Colombia can send their harvests to the world and therefore improve their economy and that of the country, according to the guidelines of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development," he added.

The coffee-growing axis, Antioquia, Tolima and Huila are the main growing areas for the crop with 16,000 hectares planted and 25,000 families working and depending on the avocado agri-industry.

ICA reported last year the country's Hass avocado exports reached US\$35 million, with the U.K., Spain, France and the Netherlands as the leading buyers.

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