

The Far East has almost become the leading market for Chilean kiwifruit exports this season, amid a huge year-on-year drop in shipments to Europe.

Total exports to all markets so far are down 13% at 115,000 metric tons (MT), according to the country's Kiwifruit Committee.

Volumes to Europe - the country's leading export destination by a decent margin - this year are down 32% from 49,806MT to 33,805MT.

At the same time, shipments to the Far East have risen by 7% from 29,931MT to 32,139MT.

China and Hong Kong have driven the increase to the region, collectively receiving 45% more fruit than by the same time last year - 21,052MT.

There were heavy supplies of local kiwifruit available in the European market when Chile began its season, which could explain the sharp drop in shipments to that market.

Although India has been a rapid growth market for Chilean kiwifruit over recent years, this year shipments are down 42% at 5,528MT. The Committee said that demand remained strong in the country, but exporters were moderating their shipments so as not to oversupply the market.

There were also declines to North America (which is down 13% at 15,972MT), as well as Russia (down 8% at 9,632MT) and the Middle East (down 18% at 4,452MT).

The Committee added that although the Northern Hemisphere is in its holiday season at the moment, the market performance of Chilean kiwifruit has been good in key markets. Sales are expected to improve from August.

According to a Crop Report by market intelligence company Decofrut, "over the last fortnight, movement of Chilean kiwifruit has remained constant in key markets, achieving improved sales prices".