

Chile is hopeful its citrus industry will gain long-awaited access to the Chinese market later this year.

Chinese inspectors are this week touring citrus facilities and production sites throughout the country.

The Chilean citrus industry has sought market access to China for many years and hopes to achieve it in November.

Officials from China's General Administration of Customs (GACC) began their tour on Monday and will carry out their inspections of the industry's various production and export processes until next Tuesday (August 20).

The Chinese delegation, led by Wy Hao, director of GACC's Second Division of Plant Quarantine was received by Chilean Undersecretary of Agriculture, Alfonso Vargas, and officials of the Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG).

The Chilean Citrus Committee, SAG and the Chilean Fruit Exporters' Association (ASOEX) coordinated the visit.

Rodrigo Astete, a SAG director, said Chile had submitted a proposal for the fruit's export certification.

The inspectors will visit various production areas in the Coquimbo, Valparaiso, O'Higgins and Metropolitan regions.

"The Chinese visitors will be in Chile for 10 days, and on the last day we will have a negotiation process to agree the protocol's definite texts," Astete said.

Miguel Canala-Echeverría, general manager of ASOEX, said: "This is very important for the Chilean citrus industry. During their visit, the Chinese officials will see first-hand the phytosanitary process in the production and export of these fruits.

He expects leaders to sign the protocol at the next APEC Summit in November.

Chile currently has access to China for cherries, blueberries, kiwifruit, table grapes, nectarines, plums, avocado, apples, and, more recently, pears.

During the 2017-18 season, cherries represented 41% of Chilean fruit exports to China. Next were table grapes with 31%, plums with 11% and nectarines with 4%.

Below is a selection of photos of the visit provided by ASOEX:









