

The 2019-20 season for Chile's fruit industry has been hugely challenging. It has been one of the harshest droughts in Chile's history, a social uprising that involved port strikes, and the worst pandemic in modern times.

Despite such difficulties, Global Reefers executive director Francisco Labarca told FreshFruitPortal.com that the sector has shown great ability to react to obstacles with professionalism and efficiency.

"Today we can say that the sector is operating normally. We have passed the peak of shipments. The fruit was packed in the fields, moved to ports and sent to its various destinations - all in line with what was expected of us from the commercial commitments the industry has," he explained.

Last season has "presented a test like never before to the entire sector's supply chain and logistics", he said.

"This goes all the way throughout harvesting and packing on farms, packaging facilities, land transport, phytosanitary measures and the actors involved with cleanliness, customs agents, logistics operators and port and naval workers," he said.

"There are a lot of actors that have had to intervene in their processes to make sure that our fruit exports reach destinations since it is coming from Chile where it's far from a lot of the markets that it is shipped to."

"The fruit industry has demonstrated its strength and professionalism when it comes to facing difficulties. Chile is one of the largest sea exporters of non-tropical fruit in the world, something that very few Chileans know."

Global Reefers consolidates

Global Reefers has been in business for 35 years and is associated with some of the main fruit exporters in the South American country. It has consolidated to become the oldest major sea-freight fresh fruit exporter out of Chile.

The company's workers have mostly come from fruit exporting and port logistics backgrounds. Labarca said that this has provided Global Reefers an advantage in making the supply chain efficient because "we all speak the same language".

"In 2013 we took an important step when we partnered with the Dutch naval shipping

company Seatrade. Specializing in global refrigerated transportation, this connection gave us access to much deeper knowledge in the sea-freight market," he said.

"This consolidation also meant that we became the only logistics company to incorporate refrigerated cargo with conventional sea transport - our containers with the main lines that operated in Chile."

"This 'expertise' in sea-freight has raised our profile in the fruit sector among other fruit companies and has made us leaders in exporting some of Chile's most exported fruits. It has been really important for us, this partnership."