

The value of the Northern Hemisphere crop of New Zealand-based kiwifruit marketer Zespri has grown by a massive 28 percent year-on-year.

Total sales of fruit from Italy, France, Greece, Japan and Korea in the 2020-21 season topped NZ\$472 million (US\$330 million) - up from NZ\$369 million (US\$258 million) the previous year.

Zespri's chief global supply officer Alastair Hulbert says the crop is now all sold, with significant increases in both the green and gold volumes. Zespri SunGold kiwifruit volumes increased by almost three million trays, or 27 percent, and Zespri Green kiwifruit by almost two million trays, or 23 percent.

All Zespri branded fruit must meet the same stringent quality standards - regardless of origin. This provides consistently premium quality to consumers around the world.

"Northern Hemisphere fruit is key to Zespri's 12-month global supply strategy," says Hulbert.

"We aim to have Zespri Kiwifruit in the market for 12 months of the year, maximising value of the brand and meeting consumer demand, and we are well on our way to achieving that goal."

Procurement of Green kiwifruit increased in the 2020-21 season from 8.1 million trays to 10 million trays.

Fruit from Greece made a significant contribution, adding to the large volumes procured through Zespri's long-term relationships with Italian growers. Production of SunGold grew across Europe and Asia as new plantings came into production.

In Japan, production increased in volume for the first time since 2014. This was attributable to SunGold overtaking Hort16a as the dominant variety. Hort16a has been largely phased out around the world as it is vulnerable to the vine-killing disease PsA.

In Korea, increased yields and packouts will combine with new plantings to double Zespri SunGold kiwifruit sales over the next three years, says Alastair.

Trials continue in Greece and the USA to determine whether these regions can further supplement the Northern Hemisphere supply of SunGold and to mitigate production risks such as pests, disease, and climate events.

"As we bridge the gap between demand and supply, we expect Zespri Global Supply to continue to grow the contribution it makes to Zespri's corporate profit, acknowledging short term headwinds are expected related to Italian frost impacted volumes and foreign exchange rates."