

By Extraberries

At the beginning of October, one of the most important events in the world was held in Madrid, Fruit Attraction 2021. It brought the main leaders of the international fruit and vegetable industry together.

One of the companies that was present was Extraberries, an Argentine agribusiness company that is committed to food safety standards in providing the freshest, safest and tastiest fruits in the industry.

Since 2007, the company has been dedicated to the fine fruit market, placing emphasis on high-quality blueberry and cherry crops, both in their production and subsequent marketing.

Arturo Zuccarelli, Commercial Manager of Extraberries said at Fruit Attraction that for the projections of the main fruits that they commercialize, the company is analyzing access to the Chinese market and the role of Argentina as a fruit and vegetable producer.

Regarding projections for the cherry season, he said: "In 2020, Argentina exported 6,700 metric tons. This year the climate has been more favorable and therefore flowering and fruit setting have been optimal. For this reason, we project that this year we will exceed last year's shipments."

"It is still early to draw conclusions because we still have at least a month ahead in which we will have to get through the end of the frosts, which we hope will not affect our productive areas, nor other areas of Argentina."

"The expectation of Extraberries is that this year our production volume will reach 2,500 exported metric tons of fruit. It is a season that is seen from the productive side as positive and interesting," Zuccarelli said.

Regarding Argentina's access to the Chinese market, he said that three years ago the country entered the Chinese market for the first time with maritime shipments and then with air shipments.

"For us it is a very interesting market because it is the main consumer of cherries in the world."

"In the 2019-20 season due to Covid-19 and later in the 2020-21 season because of the "fake news" as it was called in Chile, we did not have the results we wanted. We hope this season will run smoothly so that we can move normally," he said.

Argentine cherry projections

Regarding cherry exports, the Commercial Manager of Extraberries said: "Argentina in general and Extraberries in particular commercialize quite a significant percentage of the volume by air. We have two fields, a field in the Chimpay region in Río Negro with early fruit and another field in the Sarmiento area in Chubut."

"In the Chimpay field, the harvest begins early in the 45th week of each year, and the window is taken advantage of by commercializing a large part of its volume by air. In the case of exports to China and the U.S., maritime shipments leave through Chile because we use the Cherry Express service and we also do it through the West Coast of the U.S."

Argentina has all the necessary productive conditions to be able to grow at a much faster rate in its cherry plantations.

"Argentina has all the necessary productive conditions to be able to grow at a much faster rate in its cherry plantations. It has excellent conditions from a natural point of view and also from a human resources point of view. We have land, water, cold hours, thermal amplitude, labor and entrepreneurs," the expert said about the future of Argentine cherries.

"As for cherry investments, the initial investment requires a very important investment capital. The world develops on the basis of productive credit, which Argentina does not have in abundance, meaning all growth has a private investment that is limited."

Regardless of that, Argentina has been growing, but at a rate and speed that is very different from that of Chile. "This is why all the plantations are in optimal areas, ensuring a unique flavor and quality in the world for this commercial window."

When asked how the Argentines see the role of production compared to Chile, he said: "We have to see what will happen this year, however, for a long time the Chilean industry has had its eyes on China and the percentages and export volumes to that country exceeded 90 percent of their total."

"However, there were two very important markets that Chile has neglected, which are the U.S. and Europe, where Extraberries has maintained a very important presence over the

years."

"In these markets, there is currently a high valuation for Argentine fruit, which is a plus over Chile. What we seek is to differentiate ourselves by quality, by not having the possibility of competing in equal conditions for terms of volume. And therefore create the country brand or the Patagonia brand which is recognized in the world not only because of the fruit."

Production in Argentina

Regarding the production areas of Argentina, he said there are three areas, the first one that is furthest north in the Mendoza area, one in the center in the Río Negro valley and Neuquén area, and the most southern area which is Chubut and Santa Cruz.

"Argentina has an interesting geographical and commercial window, for example at Extraberries, we start our harvest in week 45 and we finish packing in week 4, which gives us the possibility of supplying the market with shipments, offers and arrivals until week seven or eight of the year. As an exporting company, it gives us a very exciting commercial window."

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