

In August, [Western Fumigation](#), a long-term partner to the Chilean-U.S. export trade, led a mission to Chile.

“Our goal was to share advancements on a promising alternative treatment project, and very importantly, to help foster communication and collaboration between the long-term trading partners of the Delaware River and the Republic of Chile,” said Miriam Borja-Fisher, Western Fumigation’s Senior Business Development Manager.

The delegation included Lisa Himber, President of the Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River & Bay, John Ercolani, Managing Partner of J&K Fresh Logistics, Dr. Spencer Walse of USDA-ARS, Dr. Shannon Sked, Director of Western Fumigation, and Miriam Borja-Fisher.

Western Fumigation hosted a breakfast conference on August 9th, gathering stakeholders in the Chilean export community including shipper groups, growers, exporters, trade organizations, and shipping lines.



Cristian Ureta, Gerente Comercial, Servicios de Exportaciones Frutícolas Exser Ltda., Christian Corsen, Gte. General, Cía, Frutera Santa Maria, Ricardo Koch, Gerente General, Exportadora Río Blanco, Pedro Jordán, Gerente Comercial, Exportadora Quintay S.A., Nicolás Damm, Gerente Comercial Exportadora Río Blanco

Event speakers Manuel Jose Alcaino of Decofrut and John Ercolani of J&K Fresh evaluated past grape season data and offered concrete ideas for comprehensive improvement of the supply chain. In addition, Dr. Walse presented information on the potential of an alternative fumigation method.

Once approved, this potential alternative fumigation method may offer leniency in operations and help improve capacity in the supply chain in the U.S. Western has provided services to the industry from the beginning, when the only treatment authorized for this trade was methyl bromide.

Western continues to support the use of the established treatment while there are no viable alternatives, but has entered into a collaborative agreement with USDA-ARS and the manufacturer of an eco-friendly alternative for imported Chilean grapes: eFume.

eFume is in its final stage of review with EPA for product registration anticipated by the end of this year and concurrently with USDA-APHIS-PPQ for approval of use in quarantine pre-shipment. The ultimate aim is eFume's authorized use on imported Chilean table grapes for the upcoming season.

"Once sign-off by both regulatory agencies is completed for this use, a possible second step is to pursue an organic designation—allowing for the use of eFume on organic commodities entering the U.S. from Chile," Dr. Sked told Yentzen.

As a result of the visit to Santiago, Dr. Walse and Western Fumigation agreed with ASOEX's Table Grape Committee to include collaborative R&D work with the *Fundacion de Desarrollo Fruticola* (FDF) laboratory under Mr. David Castro, Lead Entomologist-Quarantine Pests. Western Fumigation's Dr. Sked was honored to meet so many critical partners on his first trip to Chile.

"Taking over the Director's role during travel restrictions created a challenge in understanding all the complexities of the supply chain between Chile and the U.S. This trip to Santiago and Valparaiso offered me a great opportunity to more fully appreciate the critical roles that so many groups play in that supply chain.

"More importantly, this trip gave me a plethora of ideas on how Western Fumigation can further improve how we can offer services to our partners at both the Delaware River Port communities and Chile. We value these relationships greatly, and I am excited thinking about how we'll support all of the partners on both sides of the trade," he said.



Macarena Mena, Commercial Manager Latam y España Yentzen Group, Ricardo Koch, Gerente Comercial, Exportadora Río Blanco, Gustavo Yentzen, Presidente, Yentzen Group, Christian Urban, Gte. Comercial Cía, Frutera Santa Maria, Christian Corsen, Gte. General Cía, Frutera Santa Maria

Further, the delegation learned details of the recently formed ASOEX Table Grape and Logistics Committees focused on strengthening the supply chain and seeking improvements within Chile.

“With its long history of supporting Delaware River produce-importing stakeholders—such as through the Cold Storage Facility Task Force, the USDA Innovations Working Group, and the AQI [Agricultural Quarantine Inspection Fee] Work Group—the Maritime Exchange fully understands the value in bringing members together to explore new ideas and solve problems.

“We applaud ASOEX for its initiative and hope to be able to continue similar efforts in the Delaware River region,” said the Exchange’s Lisa Himber.

With Board Members Himber, Ercolani, and Borja-Fisher in Santiago, the Chilean & American Chamber of Commerce (CACC) acknowledged outgoing President, Ronald Bown, for his visionary 35-year leadership of the Exporters Association.

On Monday August 22nd, ASOEX hosted a special tribute to Mr. Bown with its IV Cuenta Publica event, and formally introduced incoming President, Ivan Marambio. The CACC, Maritime Exchange, PhilaPort, Port of Wilmington, and Western Fumigation were proud sponsors of this event. All wish Mr. Bown an exciting retirement and look forward to a strong ongoing partnership with ASOEX and the entire industry into the future!