

Question on Notice

No. 430

Asked on 11 May 2022

MR T SMITH ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline how research at Southern Queensland research facilities has led to Queensland produce being exported internationally?

ANSWER:

More than 20 international export pathways for fruit and vegetables have resulted from data produced by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' (DAF) market access research and development team. The DAF team based at the EcoSciences Precinct in Brisbane has focussed work on enhancing methyl bromide fumigation treatments for a range of fruit and vegetable products.

The market access protocol for exporting nectarines and peaches to China negotiated by the Australian Government was the first international protocol using low dose methyl bromide. The agreed low dose methyl bromide protocol was pioneered and developed by DAF's market access researchers. This protocol allows for air freight export to China of both nectarines and peaches. Since 2016, more than \$53 million in Australian nectarines and peaches have been exported to China under this protocol.

Citrus exports to China, Korea and Japan with a total export value of more than \$200 million in 2020 were underpinned by DAF market access research. Queensland citrus growers are a step closer to exporting fruit to the United States of America (USA) after the USA Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service agreed to expand access for Australian citrus exports. The announcement made in August 2021 followed successful international negotiations based on the robust scientific data generated over years by researchers at DAF and other agencies. Citrus exports from Queensland will commence once there is agreement between the USA and Australian Governments on an operational work plan.

DAF researchers are also active in the development of new export quality varieties that meet consumer preferences, are pest and disease resistant, and improve margins for growers. One example is the DAF bred Calypso mango developed by DAF's Nambour team which has seen a record 1.6 million trays harvested this season. DAF's South Queensland supply chain team is also working with key Calypso partners to enhance quality outcomes in export markets through monitoring of consignments and ensuring the right quality fruit is selected for packing.

DAF researchers in South East Queensland are undertaking significant work to improve post-harvest and supply chain handling to maintain the quality and extend the shelf-life of horticultural exports. As a result of this work, exporters have adopted technology that enables the real-time tracking of consignments along the supply chain. This enables exporters to communicate with their logistics partners to ensure optimal temperatures are maintained during transit – improving quality, extending shelf-life and reducing the risks of spoilage or rejection. DAF was also able to provide timely, tailored advice on packing and logistics to vegetable exporters who needed to shift from air freight to sea freight during the COVID-19

pandemic. This work helped Queensland exporters to maintain existing export markets during a period of significant disruption. The International Freight Assistance Mechanism provided welcome additional support for DAF's supply chain team to work with vegetable growers to export leafy vegetables to markets such as New Zealand by sea freight and for record strawberry exports to Indonesia. Research has also been undertaken to support broccoli exports which have now primarily shifted from air freight to sea freight into markets such as Singapore, Korea and Japan. The team is currently working on a project to develop a sweet potato export market strategy.