

# Delegation of Australian Berry Growers get a feel for export at Asia Fruit Logistica 2022

Joint Berry Export Trade Development project (MT20004)  
Jen Rowling, Berries Australia

In early November, a delegation of berry growers from across the country joined Berries Australia's export project team to visit Asia Fruit Logistica in Bangkok, Thailand. Growers who nominated to attend had travel expenses partially subsidised as part of the Hort Innovation funded Joint Berry Export Trade Development project (MT20004), and we welcomed growers from WA, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales.

Asia Fruit Logistica is Asia's leading exhibition for fresh fruit and vegetable marketing, covering the entire fresh produce industry value chain, its service support companies and the latest in innovative products and ideas. Although it started in Thailand in 2007, it was then moved to Hong Kong and was held there on an annual basis until 2019. COVID-19 put the event on hold until this year, with the exhibition returning to Thailand for its 15th anniversary.

Growers from the berry industry in Australia were encouraged to attend no matter what their current level of experience with export. They may already be experienced exporters, or they may just be export-curious, but attending Asia Fruit Logistica provided them with opportunities to do business with importers from existing markets, build a contact network with customers in potential new markets, discover innovative developments in trade and marketing from across the globe or simply gauge whether the world of fresh produce export is something that will suit their business in future.

Berries Australia was able to partner with Austrade for this event as part of the Australian Pavilion, which is designed to showcase Australian horticulture capability. A network of Austrade representatives from the key Asian markets were on hand throughout the event to link buyers from ASEAN markets with Australian growers and exporters through business matching and networking activities.

Industry Capability Reports for Australian blueberries and strawberries were produced to distribute to interested buyers, and cooking demonstrations helped highlight the nutritional value, versatility, and deliciousness of our wonderful berries. A series of Recipe Postcards were also available to support the the berry tastings. It was fantastic to see Australia with such a prominent presence, including not only the Australian Pavilion and surrounding Aussie "precinct" but also individual exhibits from berry producing companies such as Costa Group, Perfection Fresh, Driscoll's and Fresh Produce Group.

The atmosphere at the exhibition, which was held in the beautiful Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, was humming – literally! There is a constant hum throughout the three days from the thousands of business meetings being held in over 18 national and group pavilions, and exhibitor stands from 42 different countries and regions. This highlighted the level of importance that Asian importers and buyers place on building and maintaining face-to-face business relationships with international trade partners and is obviously a key factor in successful trade partnerships.

Speaker sessions were held concurrently throughout the event as part of the Asia Fruit Congress and it was interesting to learn about the effect that global events are having on trade, and the ever-increasing potential in the Asian region.

Numerous countries who had previously exported to Russia are seeking alternative options in Asia, and a reduced presence from China due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions allowed delegates to get to know the region and see the potential of Southeast Asia.

The berry delegation from Australia also participated in retail and wholesale market tours around Bangkok, and further information about the trip from the grower's perspective will be featured in the next edition of the Australian Berry Journal.

The trip was very capably organised by Berries Australia Export Manager Jenny Van de Meeberg. Executive Director Rachel Mackenzie and Projects Manager Jen Rowling also attended. Rachel had the opportunity along with other peak industry bodies to dine with the Australian Ambassador to Thailand and engage with senior Austrade staff to cement our commitment to increasing the export footprint of Australian berries.

All photos supplied by Berries Australia.



The Austrade stand in the Australian Pavilion



Asia Fruit Logistica is a great venue to showcase innovation to potential new customers like these giant blueberries

Recipe demonstrations showcasing Australian blueberries



Australian strawberries on sale in a Bangkok supermarket



L-R Jenny Van de Meeberg, Rachel Mackenzie & Jen Rowling, Berries Australia



The Australian delegation taking part in a tour of the wholesale markets



Australian strawberries being sampled at the Austrade stand in a simple drink recipe



Recipe postcards produced to support the tastings of strawberries & blueberries at the Austrade stand.



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RASPBERRY AND BLACKBERRY FUND

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STRAWBERRY FUND

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