

# Getting Retailers 'Berry Ready' in Thailand

Jen Rowling, Project Manager, Berries Australia

Strawberry exporters from Western Australia travelled to Bangkok in July to present a series of training workshops and promotional activities for two of Thailand's major retailers.

The in-market initiative was implemented with funding from the Australian Government's Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) program and was collaboratively coordinated by Berries Australia and Austrade, with the assistance of WA strawberry growers, Jamie Michael, Adrian Surianingrat and Thai Tran. Western Australia is currently the only state sending export strawberries to this market due to protocol limitations.

The objectives of the visit were to showcase the Australian Strawberry Industry and provide training workshops for staff of Tops and Makro, two of the leading retailers in Thailand. The workshops featured a strong storage and handling focus aimed at store managers and fresh produce managers. This was delivered with a "train-the-trainer" approach designed to empower the managerial staff to pass on the information from the training to floor staff at their respective stores.

Attendance at the training workshops was excellent, with over 200 people participating in the Tops workshop, either in person or online, and over 25 staff attending the training for Makro. Participants included buyers, Quality Control, Quality Assurance and in-store retail staff from numerous stores across the Thailand capital Bangkok. Printed materials were produced for distribution to staff and a video was created that will be shared through retail networks in Bangkok and other regional parts of Thailand to further promote correct storage and handling of Australian strawberries.

A range of in-store and market promotional activities were also coordinated, with cooking demonstrations, taste testing and distribution of recipes to help educate

both retail staff and consumers on the ways that strawberries can be incorporated into Thai households.

The in-store events were very well attended with our Berries Australia delegation being joined by Austrade delegates including Trade Commissioner, Esther Sun and Agricultural Counsellor, Amber Parr. Tops senior management executives also joined the promotional afternoon at the store in Central Ladprao.

Anecdotal reports from the exporters who participated in the Thailand training and promotional initiative have indicated that the activity drove an immediate and significant boost in sales. They have also reported that the visit and the investment in the training has solidified their relationships with the importers and retailers.



**WA Strawberry growers (L) Adrian Surianingrat and (R) Thai Tran.** Photo credit: Diva Studio



**Over 25 Makro staff attended the Australian Strawberries training workshop**



**Makro staff learned how to handle, merchandise and display Australian Strawberries**



**Jamie Michael from Ti Produce in Western Australia training Makro managers**



**Training was given to 200 Tops staff both in-person and online**



**Fresh Australian Strawberries were provided to enable staff to touch and taste the quality of the product**

All photos supplied by Diva Studio and Berries Australia



An in-store display in the Central Ladprao Tops store in Bangkok



In-store promotional activity included recipe demonstrations and taste testing

All photos supplied by Diva Studio and Berries Australia