

LITCHI WORLD NEWS

Regina Cronje and Sakkie Froneman

ARC-INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL AND
SUBTROPICAL CROPS



TAIWAN

Lychee research creates new rose-scented fruit

A NEW VARIETY OF LYCHEE, which has taken over two decades to develop, provides two harvests and can also be refrigerated for longer. Researchers in Taiwan recently unveiled a rose-scented lychee which is seen as having huge economic potential. The new crop, the fruit of 21 years of botanical work, was cultivated by the Council of Agriculture's Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute. The fragrant fruits can be stored in a refrigerator for longer than the regular variety. Development of the new crop began in 1986 when Chang Jer-way, head of the horticulture department at the Institute's Chiayi branch, cross-fertilised two other types of lychees. The principal attraction of the rose-flavoured lychee is that the flesh is delicate and chewy, while the shell is a glamorous red colour, Chang said. The larger size of the lychee (weighing on average between 25 g and 40 g per fruit) combined with its smaller seeds, sweetness and easy-to-peel skin, all contribute to the fruit's unique qualities,

Chang added. The economic benefits of the fruit are high because, unlike other lychees which grow from about May to mid-July, the rose-scented lychee can also be grown and harvested from mid-July into August. As a result of these qualities, fruit farmers would be able to increase their income, because theirs will be the only lychees on the market during that period, Chang said. By comparison with other lychees such as the 'Hak Ip' (black leaf) – which accounts for up 70% of the lychees on the market – and the 'No Mai Tsz' 'Guiwei' and longan, the rose-scented lychee's extended storage period adds to its economic strength, Chiayi branch director Yang Hong said. While a normal lychee can only be stored for 7 to 14 days, and the Guiwei lychee can sit in refrigeration for up to 20 days, the rose-scented lychee can be held in a chilled atmosphere for as long as 30 days.

(Source: <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/yes/2012/06/20/2003535817>; shortened)

TAIWAN GETS GREEN LIGHT FOR LYCHEES TO AUSTRALIA

THE AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture has given consent for the import of Taiwanese fresh lychees. The fruit will be subject to a range of quarantine conditions. The country has been waiting since 2003 for entry in Australia. Australia has been importing fresh lychees from China and Thailand, also subject to quarantine regulations, since 2004. South Africa also has the right to export lychees to Australia, but to date has not carried out any trade there. The final report identifies fruit flies, litchi fruit borer and mealybugs as

quarantine pests that require measures.

In its Biosecurity Advice, the Department said the final report was an administrative step and "is not the final step in the entire import process. No import permit will be issued until the Department is completely satisfied that import conditions are consistent with measures proposed to manage biosecurity risks. The issuance of an import permit is a regulatory process that is subject to judicial review."

(Source: queenslandcountrylife.com.au)

AUSTRALIA

Australian lychees gain NZ access

AUSTRALIAN LYCHEES HAVE BEEN exported to New Zealand for the first time following a new import policy. The New Zealand market has opened up to Australian lychees for the first time, according to the Australian Department for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The first shipment of the tropical fruit was recently sent from Brisbane to New Zealand in what the industry hopes is a precursor to an annual 200 tonne trade by 2013. New Zealand's new import regulations allowing the fruit in, require pre-export irradiation and must be sourced from orchards using standard cultivation, pest control, harvesting and packing procedures.

"The Rudd government will continue working to secure new international market access for our fresh farming produce, to underpin local jobs and economic growth," the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, said in a press release.

"The lychee industry already contributes to Australia's horticulture industries and regional communities, producing 4 500 tonnes of the tropical fruit, worth A\$16 m each year. Australia's lychee exports have risen sharply in recent years, with about 20% of lychee production now exported, earning around A\$3,2 m per year."

(Source: <http://www.fruitnet.com/produceplus/article/2184/australian-lychees-gain-nz-access>) **ST**



MEXICO

Mexico hopes to extend litchi season with new cultivar

MEXICO PLANS TO EXTEND ITS litchi season by planting the late maturing Salathiel cultivar in the northeast Huasteca region, the National Institute for Forestry, Agriculture and Livestock (INIFAP) has announced. The variety grows in clusters of eight to ten fruit with an average weight of 14,5 g and 70% of flesh with small seeds and thick shell. Researchers have recommended it should be planted in rainy regions,

preferably with good irrigation to gain the best results. Salathiel starts bearing fruit three to five years after plantation and can normally yield 4,5 metric tons per hectare. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development and Fishing (SAGARPA) hopes the Salathiel cultivar will offer greater diversification in Huasteca, as well as extending the harvest time and offer more job opportunities. Researchers have

recommended Salathiel be planted in the rainy season at a density of 204 trees per hectare in seven by seven meter squares. According to official data in 2010, there were 579,24 hectares of litchi in 10 of Huasteca's municipalities.

(Source: www.freshfruitportal.com/2012/08/15/) 

INDIA

Litchi supply to be doubled this year

MUZAFFARPUR: With the litchi season only a month away, the growers, traders and entrepreneurs are making hectic efforts to double the supply of litchi from here this season and send at least 5 000 tonnes of fresh quality litchi from Muzaffarpur to different metros through cold chain system and another 8 000 tonnes of juice to international markets through a couple of branded companies. Motivated by the National Litchi Research Centre, Muzaffarpur, the growers have given more attention on maintaining quality of the fruit this year to get higher prices. For this, the farmers have first sprayed a particular hormone, then insecticide and finally, they are now spraying water on the trees to maintain the required temperature. The prospect of the crop is expected to be fairly good this season, though around 20% of the laden fruit on the top portion of the trees has fallen down during the week-long strong westerly wind. But those who have followed the instructions given by the research centre, have

suffered the least loss.

(Source: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-04-15/patna/38555094_1_bholanath-jha-litchi-season-national-litchi-research-centre)

LITCHI IS AN IMPORTANT FRUIT

in India. It was introduced into India during the 18th century in the north east region (Tripura), from where it came to eastern states and subsequently to northern states. The area and production of litchi in India has increased markedly in the last 10 to 12 years. In 2010/11, the area under litchi was 78 000 hectares (from 58 000 hectares in 2001/02) and the production was 497 000 tons (from 356 000 tons in 2001/02). Presently the average productivity of litchi in India is 6,5 tons/hectare. The major litchi growing states in India are Bihar (45,6%), West Bengal (17,1%), Assam (8,2%), Jharkhand (7,2%), Punjab (4,8%), Chhatisgarh (4,3%), Orissa (3,9%), Uttarakhand (3,8%), Tripura (3,3%) and others (1,8%).

About 20 litchi cultivars are growing

in different states of India, of which the cultivars 'Shahi', 'China', 'Bombai', 'Bedana', 'Rose Scented', 'Purbi', 'Kasba' and 'Muzaffarpur' are grown commercially. The harvesting period starts in April in the north eastern states and continues until July in the northern states. However, the peak harvesting period is in May to June. There is a huge domestic demand for fresh fruits. The southern states of India do not grow litchi and are mostly supplied by the northern states. India exports small amounts of litchi to the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Kuwait, Oman), Singapore, UK and France after sulphur-fumigation. The domestic price at the market varies between US\$ 1-3 per kg (farm gate price 0.75-2 \$ per kg). The processed products include juice, canning and jelly.

The major cultivation problems include irregular bearing, sun burning and fruit cracking, fruit drop, erinose mite and fruit borer.

(Source: *Sisir Mitra, personal communication, May 2013*)