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Berry export focus blooms out of industry's sweet success

The rise and rise of the Australian strawberry, raspberry and blackberry industries has seen the sectors redouble their international trade focus, with the release of a dedicated export plan to grow their global presence over the next 10 years.

Driven by significant grower input, the [Berry Export Strategy 2028](#) maps the sectors' current position, where they want to be, high-opportunity markets and next steps.

Hort Innovation trade manager Jenny Van de Meeberg said the value and volume of raspberry and blackberry exports rose by 100 per cent between 2016 and 2017. She said the Australian strawberry industry experienced similar success with an almost 30 per cent rise in export volume and a 26 per cent rise in value to \$32.6M over the same period.

"Australian berry sectors are in a firm position at the moment," she said. "Production, adoption of protected substrate cropping, improved genetics and an expanding geographic footprint have all helped put Aussie berries on a positive trajectory.

"We are seeing a real transition point. Broad industry interest and a strong commercial appetite for export market development combined with the potential to capitalise on existing trade agreements and build new trade partnerships has created this perfect environment for growth."

High income countries across Europe, North America and Northern Asia have been identified as having a palate for Australian grown berries with more than 4244 tonnes of fresh berries exported in the last financial year alone.

The strategy identified the best short-term prospect markets for the Australian blackberry and raspberry industry as Hong Kong, Singapore, The United Arab Emirates and Canada. The strongest short-term trade options identified for the strawberry sector were Thailand, Malaysia, New Zealand and Macau.

The strategy focuses heavily on growing the existing strawberry export market from 4 per cent to at least 8 per cent of national production by volume, in markets with a capacity and willingness to pay a premium for quality fruit. For raspberries and blackberries, the sectors aim to achieve a 5 per cent boost in exports assessed by volume across identified markets by 2021.

Tasmanian raspberry exporter Nic Hansen said Australia offers some of the sweetest and most attractive berries in the world, and this combined with our stringent food safety standards across all stages of the supply chain puts growers in a solid position.

"We have a great product, we are hungry to expand trade and now with this new plan in place, we have a clear roadmap towards driving growth," Mr Hansen said.

He said it is exciting to see new export market prospects for raspberries: "The more options we have for export the better. Now we just have to get on with the job of ensuring industry has all the tools it needs, such as supporting data and relationship building opportunities, to thrive in new markets."

This project was commissioned by Hort Innovation, and developed by market analysts and research consultants Auspex Strategic Advisory and AgInfinity. Hort Innovation will work now with berry sectors to determine levy-funded activities to support trade.

See a summary of the strategy on the [Hort Innovation website](#).

For more information on the berry industries, refer to the [Horticulture Statistics Handbook](#) and the Strategic Investment Plans for [strawberries](#), [raspberries](#) and [blackberries](#).

Growers seeking more information should email trade@horticulture.com.au

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