

## Grower case study — CY16004 Export readiness and market access

<b>Grower</b>	Leon Cotsaris
<b>Location</b>	Renmark, South Australia
<b>Area planted</b>	16 hectares

### What was the research about

Over the 2016-17 to 2018-19 seasons, CY16004 *Export readiness and market access* (delivered by Cherry Growers Australia (CGA)) worked to develop an export culture in the cherry industry by equipping growers with the skills and resources to capitalise on evolving market access opportunities into lucrative protocol markets. The project delivered many initiatives, including annual export workshops to support the grower and packhouse export registration process, crop monitoring, standard operating procedures to support compliance, and industry representation for market access requests.

Leon Cotsaris, a cherry grower from Renmark, South Australia talks about how the program has helped him to achieve export registration into several lucrative protocol markets.

### Why did you start to export cherries?

“We have always been early season cherry growers supplying the domestic market from late October onwards and were generally satisfied with the returns that we were achieving in this window. However even as a smaller grower, we’ve come to understand that there is also significant export market potential in protocol markets that also matches the timing of our season. This advantage is especially the case when more supply from other growing regions begins to hit the domestic market into November.”

### Have you been exporting to protocol markets?

“We exported into Vietnam in the 2019 and 2020 seasons, which coincided closely with the material and resources provided through the CY16004 project supporting the export registration process. Since then, we’ve also maintained registrations for the Thailand and South Korea markets, however seasonal challenges with heat and flooding limited our ability to export at all over the last two seasons.”

### How has the cherry export development program helped you export into protocol markets?

“We’ve attended the export registration workshops since 2018, which are compulsory for those looking to export. They are really important to ensure that you get all of the information and material to follow through with the registration process. We’ve also found the Export Manual to be a useful resource to spell out everything that we needed to do across the different markets, as they each have their own requirements. The Cherry Growers Australia website was really helpful for providing other resources, including linking to the MICOR (Manual of Importing Country Requirements) database. We go there knowing that we are accessing the most relevant and correct information. The support provided by the Cherry Growers’ project staff was also very helpful as well.

It turns out that we were already undertaking the crop monitoring requirements for the purposes of checking for fruit fly, so it was just a matter of tweaking how we recorded this information to help us meet the export registration requirements.”

### Were there any challenges?

“In 2018 we had plans to export to Vietnam and we sent our fruit off for inspection in Adelaide prior to following through with the shipment. However we did not realise that fruit inspections were required to be performed on the growing site and as a result, we weren’t able to export any of that fruit despite the other preparations that we made. We were still learning about the various requirements at that point and will not make that mistake again.”

### What have been some of the benefits of exporting into protocol markets?

“While the pricing advantage that we receive relative to the domestic market is only realised for part of our season as we are such an early supplier, access to the protocol export markets means that we can continue to maintain our price at a similar level across the entire season. This is underpinned by a much larger customer base in these markets which show a strong level of demand.

We also have an advantage as we can get our fruit into these markets quicker than our competitors from South America through more airfreight options. This will continue to be an important value proposition into the future even though we supply a significantly lower volume.”

### What does the future hold for your business in terms of cherry exports and market access?

“We see a strong future in exports, and we have made plans to expand our plantings so that we can continue to realise the advantages that these protocol markets will offer in a way that won’t compromise the domestic market.”

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*Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture. For more information visit [www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au).*

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