

Final Report

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Melon outbound trade mission

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Delivery partner:

Australian Melon Association

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VM18007

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Confidentiality:

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No

Yes (whole report)

Yes (sections of report are confidential)

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Summary

The Australian Melon Association was represented at the 2019 Asia Fruit Logistica trade show as part of the Taste Australia display. The event was very successful with a large amount of interest by delegates in Australian melon.

Keywords

Melon; export

Introduction

The value of Australian melon exports has increased in recent years and the Australian Melon Association (AMA) is committed to increasing that share of global melon markets. The Australian Melon Industry Strategic Plan 2016-2021 supports export development, as does the current Hort Innovation Melon Research & Development Strategic Investment Plan.

With this in mind, Hort Innovation and the AMA committed to leading the first trade show participation by the industry in undertaking representation at the 2019 Asia Fruit Logistica trade show 4-6 September 2019 as part of the Taste Australia display. The venue was AsiaWorld-Expo Hong Kong.

VM17001 Melon Industry Development and Communication coordinated this project through existing budgets and the Melon Industry Development Manager (IDM) and two melon growers attended to represent the Australian melon industry.

Methodology

The project

- Arranged and coordinated logistics for the attendance of Melon industry representative and two Melon growers at AFL 2019
- Communicated the outcomes of the outbound trade mission to the broader industry via appropriate communication channels such as Melon e-newsletters.

VM17001 Melon Industry Development and Communication coordinated this project through existing budgets.

This involved:

- organizing the grower representation
- booking of travel arrangements
- preparation of display materials
- coordinating fruit displays and delivery to Hong Kong
- organizing a retail tour
- presenting at the trade commissioners and Austrade at meeting prior to AFL
- liaising at the display space at Asia Fruit Logistica

Grower representation

Two growers nominated to be part of Asia Fruit Logistica.

Andrew Martens, watermelon grower from Bundaberg, Queensland. Marto Farms has exported in the past. This business did not display fruit as it was out of season. Bradley Dawson, a rockmelon grower from Mildura, Victoria. Dawson Co. has exported in the past. This business had melon varieties on display. Both businesses are desiring to build exports.

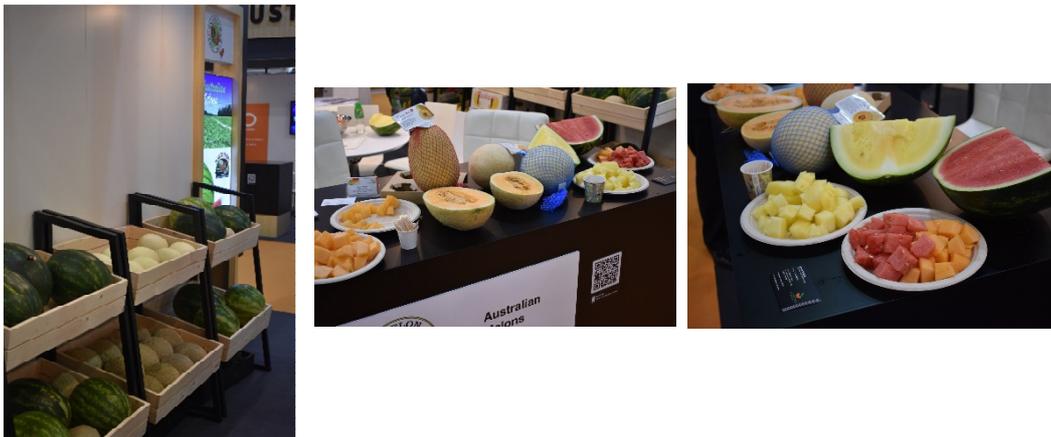
Further self-funded delegates accompanied the trade mission. Daintree Fresh had yellow and red watermelon on display and manager, Shaun Jackson attended the melon display at AFL. Ian Macleod from Global Fresh who is developing exports in Japan also attended.



Image: L -Brad Dawson at the melon display; R- Andrew Martens talking business

Display materials

Displays of melon fruit were arranged using supplied display cases. Melons were cut and served to delegates at AFL. Foot traffic was strong through the display and growers fielded many enquiries about product, type, quality and availability



Display light boxes were developed from materials of the AMA and grower representatives.



A presentation on the Australian melon industry was made available to AFL delegates with an Australian Melons-branded external drive.



Retail visits

Due to the cancellation of the Hort Innovation-organised retail tour, The IDM organised retail visits for melon representatives. These were to:

- City Super
- Market place by Jasons
- Olivers the Delicatessen
- Food le Parc
- Taste Supermarkets

High quality watermelon and rockmelon was on display, as well cut and wrapped fruit. A Taste Australia tasting event was underway at City Super.



Image: Taste Australia display at City Super.



MARKET PLACE

by JASONS



food le parc



Taste Supermarkets



Cooking display

Chef Tim Hollands used melons in some of the cooking displays and there was cut melon as part of the fruit platters.



Austrade briefing

The IDM attended the Austrade briefing prior to AFL. A presentation was made about the Australian melon industry to better inform trade staff about the melon industry and its potential in export markets.

The melon presentation included the following information:

- In-country visits by the melon IDM to Asia and the Middle East
- Outline of the melon businesses attending 2019 AFL
- Description of the new opportunities in the Japan market
- Progress of irradiation as a fruit fly treatment for export to New Zealand
- Progress with food safety in the Australian melon industry

The following information was summarized from the presentation made by Hong Kong Austrade staff:

- Hong Kong consumers buy in small amounts
- Gift market is very important
- Culture of festivals with fruit aimed as gifts at that time.
- 70% of tourists are mainland Chinese
- Consume 1900t/day fruit of which 90% is imported. 40% of imports are re-exported.
- Australia's selling points are uniqueness of varieties grown
- Export is a long game. Must have reliable supply, good communication and branding of product.
- Be wary of exclusivity – always have a trial period

- Expect an instant response to your enquiries – 48 hours is too long
- Be careful of protecting Intellectual property Rights
- Establish prompt payment systems
- Austrade Guide to Hong Kong fresh markets – Understanding food & Beverage Retailers in Hong Kong

Outputs

The outputs of VM18007 were:

- Industry communications regarding the outcomes of the trade mission.
- A post-event evaluation report that includes key learnings and recommendations for the future.

Communications

Communications were undertaken prior to AFL to encourage grower participation in the event. Two growers were selected for support at AFL through a competitive process, based on the growers' export-readiness and their willingness to engage in the AFL trade show activities. These growers also part-funded their participation at the trade show.

Activities were:

1. Direct email to levy payers
2. Information in Melon Enews in June and July 2019.
3. A report on AFL will be placed in Melon News December 2019 edition. Melon news is a printed quarterly journal posted directly to levy payers.

Outcomes

The outcomes of VM18007 were to:

- raise international awareness of Australian Melons,
- build international networks and relationships with individuals, companies, and governments,
- capture market intelligence and trade insights for dissemination to Melon levy payers.

The outcomes were achieved by:

Monitoring and evaluation

A formal M&E program was not undertaken, however feedback on the event has been very positive and the two growers who attended are following up on business contacts made during the event.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Australian melon industry continues to invest in attending Asia Fruit Logistica. The outcomes for a first venture into such a trade display was very successful. The momentum for this event will only increase as more grower become aware of the opportunities to be had at such an event.

As the melon industry has only recently introduced a research & development levy (January 2017), the industry has just begun to invest in export and trade development activities. This trade mission is one of the first investment activities.

To date, export development has been ad hoc and without an industry-led coordination. With the success of this activity, it is recommended that the industry continues its investment in export development. A market access and trade development project that delivers the types of activities listed below, would build on this excellent start to export investment.

Possible export activities as part of market access and trade development project:

- individual support to bring possible export growers to a level of readiness for export participation
- trade show participation under the Taste Australia banner – Asia Fruit Logistica; Gulf Food; FoodEx (Japan)
- levy-payer in-market visit to key markets such as Japan
- retail education workshops in key markets
- development of market access applications for markets including South Korea

Practicalities

The following recommendations are made for the logistics of the event:

- Include bar stools instead of chairs – easier to speak with visitors
- Have a preparation bench rather than a table for prepping fruit for tastings
- Require equipment for preparing and serving fruit
- Brochure holders are available – use these for printed material
- Require cardholders
- If a wall space is allocated, use it for a video display or poster display
- Video could be mounted above welcome desk