Exporters Report – 20/21

**Australia**

* Pre Xmas export volume was slightly  down compared to this time last year. We exported approximately 75  tonne compared to 109   tonne the previous year 32% down on same period last  year. This was even after the fact of excessive rain and bad weather in Australia  damaging blueberry crops  which  suggests the pre Xmas window into Australia is becoming more difficult. If the Australian growing regions experienced good weather we may not have exported any blueberries during this period.

* In January  we exported 105 tonne  compared to 122 tonne the previous year a 14% decrease  in volume. For the very reasons above coupled with the fact that the industry has no really decent varieties of blueberries to offer in this window, January also looks to become more challenging at least until Australian day which is on January 26th.

* In February, our we exported 490 tonnes compared to 533 tonne previous year a decrease of 8% We started to see good demand during this period

* In March we exported 600 tonne compared to 637 tonne previous year a 6% decrease in volume, pricing into retail was similar to last  year  around the $36.00-$46.00  AUD dollar mark and demand was good especially more so in WA where prices were higher!

* In April we exported 210 tonnes compared to 216 tonne the previous year, approximately 2% down on the previous year.
* In May we exported 37 tonnes compared to 81 tonne previous year a 54% reduction on previous year.

* For the season we    exported 1520 tonne to Australia compared with 1700 tonne for all of last year approximately 11 % down on previous year. Which was surprising

**Other Markets**

* We exported approx 179 tonne to mostly Asian destinations compared with a total of 186 tonne last year approximately 3.7 % down on previous year.

* **Total Export Volume comparison**

* The 2019/2020 blueberry season we exported 1806 tonne and was the biggest season the industry has ever had export wise, this year in total we exported 1698 tonne which is approximately 6 % down on previous year. Australia still remains our biggest market with approximately 89 % of fruit shipped there, Vietnam was our next biggest at 5.45% and various countries made up the balance

**Effect of Covid 19**

* Increased freight rates especially to Asian destinations with freight more than doubling  and apart from WA the increase in rates in Australia were not so proportionate and manageable.
* Decreased freight as less available options especially to Australia in February where we saw a lot of avocados travel by air  that normally would travel by sea but due to covid shipping became a nightmare forcing the industry to airfreight.
* Not enough labour to pick the fruit in time resulting in soft fruit.
* On a positive note there was no effect on demand as blueberries were seen as a healthy option and if anything demand increased

**Threats to the Industry**

* High interception rate in Australia resulting in double fumigation and of more a concern being red flagged by the Australian authorities  which puts our export at risk into this market.
* More and more fruit being produced in the later windows in Australia.
* Threat of market access into Australia from Chile with Chilean avocado’s setting a precedent
* Threat of market access into Vietnam from Chile with Chilean cherries setting a precedent.
* As mentioned higher freight rates and reduced freight capacity due to Covid19