

MAGAZINE

ASOCIACIÓN GREMIAL DE PROCESADORES Y EXPORTADORES DE CIRUELAS SECAS DE CHILE

Chilean prune wants to raise environmental standards and improve the knowledge of its products

Along with the Ministry of Agriculture, CORFO's Sustainability and Climate Change Agency and Chileprunes this important sector takes a decisive step towards sustainability in order to strengthen its position in international markets.



In a significant advance towards a more sustainable and competitive agro-industry CORFO's Sustainability and Climate Change Agency and the Trade Association of Processors and Exporters of Prunes from Chile (Chileprunes) signed an Clean Production Agreement (APL, its initials in Spanish) to implement The Sustainability Standard for the Prune Agro-industry. This agreement marks the beginning of a transformational process that will be developed in a 36-month deadline to implement the new Standard made under the program Chile Origen Consciente (Chile, Conscious Origin, ChOC, its initials in Spanish) an initiative from the Ministry of Agriculture that promotes the adoption of sustainability standards in the Chilean agro-industry.

In this way, the objective is to strengthen competitiveness and knowledge of the prune, one of the main Chilean agricultural exports, that generates more than US\$ 260 millions per year. This will be achieved through the optimization of the productive processes, the reduction of environmental impacts and the improvement in the relationships with the local communities.

Ximena Ruz, executive director of the Sustainability and Climate Change Agency, assures that as an agency we have managed more than 200 APLs and we have wide experience to support its implementation as well as to coordinate with the public sector to assure that the efforts made by the state reach you in an effective manner. We take great pride in that the Ministry of Agriculture has adopted the APLs as a key tool to boost the Chile Origen Consciente program.

Pedro Pablo Díaz, president of Chileprunes, adds that "this achievement defines very well how things must be made. It is the best example of how public and private initiatives, through serious work, can conclude good projects in an adequate time; their outcomes will provide the sector and the country with an extraordinary power. Here an industry, an entire trade guild and several institutions, are involved in a cross-cutting project to obtain a certification in terms of sustainability that is going to be very convenient".

The APL (Clean Production Agreement) involves the collaboration of the Ministries of Energy, Environment, Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, the Agency of Agricultural Studies and Policies, Odepa in Spanish), the Agricultural and Livestock Agency (SAG), the National Agency for Promoting Exports, Prochile,

the Chilean Agency for Food Quality and Safety (Achipa) and Chilean Agency of Energy Efficiency. These institutions as signatories of the agreement will help in the implementation of the 135 actions in the Sustainability Standard that involves 12 key themes including energy efficiency, green house gases reduction, water management, residue management, security and projections of the worker conditions, safety management and due diligence of the law among others.

Moreover, the aim is to strengthen the internal capacities of the companies to guarantee the correct implementation of the actions needed and to monitor and report the improvements in sustainability through key indicators in the sector. The companies that are committed to APL will be able to obtain the certification ChOC.

Daniela Acuña, vice director of Odepa, highlighted that "the signature of the APL (Clean Production Agreement) for the prunes represents an advance in sustainability in the agricultural sector which is a commitment of the Ministry of Agriculture and President Boric. The public-private coordination allows us to advance in these matters and to integrate a new sector to the program Chile Origen Consciente".

The project through which the sector diagnosis was made, the Sustainability Standard and the APL proposal had the support of the Foundation for Agricultural Innovation (FIA, its initials in Spanish) through the initiative "design of a sustainability standard for the agro-industrial sector of prunes" made by Chileprunes and the technical support of the Interamerican Institute of Cooperation for the Agriculture, IICA, its initials in Spanish).

Carolina Fuentes, innovation executive at Foundation for Agricultural Innovation (FIA, its initials in Spanish), said that this institution has as an objective to promote innovation processes in domestic agriculture. "Supporting an agro-industry as relevant for Chile as the prune, which is demanded worldwide, needs sustainability protocols and standards to access these markets; we are supporting this with a project from 2022".

Chileprunes, which represents more than 70% of the Chilean prune exports, has been a key factor in the design of the two specific sustainability standards in the ChOC (Chile, Conscious Origin) program: one for the primary production phase (plum orchards) and other for the agro-industrial adequacy (dehydration and tenderizing process of the fruit). During this first stage, an APL (Clean Production Agreement) was designed focused in the agro-industrial adequacy and the second stage will be focused in the primary production, making sure that the entire value chain meets the highest standard of sustainability.

We invite you to watch a reel drawn up by Odepa / Ministry of Agriculture of Chile: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DC45lrdxnqz/>



Concluding thoughts after the IPA Congress

For the first time in 30 years, in Argentina, took place the World Congress of Prunes organized by the Prune Association (IPA), the world's most important event in the prune industry.

At the beginning of November, in Mendoza, a great number of visitors and speakers gathered; of course, the Chilean delegation was the largest together with the local delegation. They agree that it was a good congress, with great attendance and representatives from every country. It was well organized and set in a place that combines country and agro-industry.

Paulo Estrada, product manager at GoodValley, said that the presentations were excellent, with a lecture on leadership and innovation that was a real contribution to the Congress. "May be, the only thing I missed, was to see a farm in normal conditions, not top of the line like the ones we saw. I would have liked to visit a more typical Argentinian farm, without anti-hail netting, without frost control, and average size orchard or a bit smaller, subject to normal inclement Argentinian weather", he said.

For his part, **Agustín Marín, Onizzo's general manager**, agrees in that they wanted to know more about the reality in Argentina, "one that has lights and shadows. The good part is that there are farmers investing a lot in technology, with awesome orchards even protected from hail by roofs. On the other hand, there are farmers with less resources who with great effort carry out their crops. We are talking about significative differences in productivity: from 3,000 to 10,000 kilos per hectare".

Of course, the future looks good for Argentina. "there is interest, desire to invest (in technologies like nettings and webs to mitigate the effects of the weather) and what we saw was a good final product. For us, this is important because they are direct competitors, but they could be providers in certain cases; they have their limitations because they have few international agreements to sell their fruit. This could represent an opportunity for Chile, if we collaborate with them".

Pablo Campino, member of the technical committee of Chileprunes and executive at Pacific Nut adds that the challenges of the Argentinian prunes are two: "open markets; today they have 5 or 6 while Chile has 70. For sure they must go to the world to sell their fruit. And they need technified irrigation, because the drought affects them as well (they have 20% of the terrain with technified irrigation and we have 80%). They know that aligning institutions in this direction they will solve their problems in short time".

What Campino did miss is a better strengthening and alignment of the country reports from the participating countries in a single format, "we had to dig a bit to access the information".

China.... A threat or an opportunity?

The member of the technical committee at Chileprunes also highlights from what he heard what is happening with China. "It has always been airtight regarding the number of plantations they have, but now it is a fact that the surface they



have planted is practically the same the world has among California, Chile, France, Argentina and a couple of small countries. The big question is to know if it is a threat or an opportunity... time will tell".

Estrada adds that China makes the challenges of the prune market not completely clear. "We do not know what is going to happen with that country and we are not clear as to how to talk about this subject with California, France and Argentina".

With uncertainty or without it, China's demand continues to grow buying fruit that before went to other markets. "It is key to be present in China. Without the Chinese it would be very difficult to sell all our production. And while most of the countries are facing a drop in their productions we manage to maintain and even grow", adds Agustín Marín.

Another important subject addressed by the interviewees is that the global consumption of prunes seems to be stagnant; and if the world population increases it means that the per capita prune consumption decreases, even though we are talking about a super-food that can be very well marketed the way Chile is doing it in India.

"But as producers, in general, we are not using this well as a marketing strategy; the endless list of benefits for human health. There is a big part of the population, Generation Z and Millennials (30% of the population) that do not eat prunes even though they are consumers looking for healthy food", adds Campino.

Finally, he highlights the huge potential that Chile has with the D'agen variety considering that the main actors, leaving China aside, that belong to IPA, are all going downwards in their productions. This considering the lack of new surfaces or plantations and the decrease in production due, mainly, to weather factors.

In Chile, despite weather events, we have seen that the surfaces, thanks to the good returns of the last years, have slightly increased. We know that we have the ideal conditions, regarding soil and weather, to produce good volumes and calibers. This represents an important commercial attraction for our producers who can get good profits. In this regard I think we have significative competitive advantages as a country.

Argentina's voice

For his part, the coordinator of the Prune Industry Cluster from Mendoza, owner of the organizing institution, Francisco Araujo, explained that this is the first IPA Congress in Argentina during the 34 years this organization has. "We coordinate efforts to promote the consumption of prunes and to develop new market opportunities, always with a vision of international cooperation and responsibility with the future of the sector".

He added that there came seven delegations of country members of IPA and that it was "an honor to receive the delegations of Spain and China". He stressed the idea that "there are not so many productive chains that have a space for discussion like the one we have, where we can work together the most important themes regarding our industry, from the sustainability challenges to opening new markets".

In Argentina, the planted cultivation area is about 10,000 hectares and it is mainly in the provinces of Mendoza (80% of the planted cultivation area), San Juan, Río Negro and Neuquén, where the weather is favorable for its development.

The annual plum production in Argentina varies depending on the weather and foreign demand. In good years, the production can be higher than 100,000 tons although during droughts, frosts, strong winds (called Zonda in this country) the amount can be less than half.



Regarding orchards, 2024 is looking better for the prunes in relation to last year

In Chile the period of fruit development or filling period has started a few weeks ago, which is valid for different Chilean export products and, of course, for the D'Agen plum that after a drying process is offered as prunes to more than 75 countries in the world.



So far, this season, and with the focus in the orchards, we can say that this year looks promising, among many factors due the good hours of cold this winter (opposed to last year), without significant frost during the spring and a good amount of rainfall, even though there were a couple of intense rains in September which affected some areas of the VI Region, the main area for the plum.

Nicolás Tagle, producer and quality manager at Kaikén, projects an auspicious outlook for the 2025 harvest, thanks to what this year has been like:

"The orchards are showing a more even and stable production, which predicts a better yield for prunes. Although in some fields thinning had to be done, it was done in a more targeted manner. On the other hand, in the fields there was a slightly higher than usual abortion rate, which helped regulate the load, allowing for balanced growth. We are seeing trees with good potential and superior quality fruits, which is an encouraging sign for the sector."

Moderate temperatures and uniform flowering have been key factors. "Unlike last year, where weather conditions affected the low Brix degrees obtained at harvest, this year shows a more controlled and optimal development, expecting to have higher Brix degrees which helps better conversions," said Tagle, who expressed optimism about the performance of prunes this year, with sizes estimated to be in the 70/80 range, representing a significant improvement compared to the 2023 results.

Regarding the drying process, which will begin in February, Tagle stressed the importance of proper planning. "We are working with producers to ensure that everything is ready for the drying season, with the expectation of a more uniform and better quality harvest," he said.

In the Lolol area

Patricio Pavez, general administrator of Agrícola La Palma, makes a punctual analyzes of the Lolol area, where they have their operation and he says that "this winter had a good number of cold hours, which allowed the orchards to reach a normal load. This should avoid problems in the Brix degrees, despite the fact that in some orchard there was an excess of fruit", which could affect slightly this indicator".

"The country this year has less fruit than last year, with less load than the last season, but we still had to thin some orchards that had excess fruit. This smaller load is good because it makes for better caliber. Less base loads allow for a bigger fruit", explained the general administrator of Agrícola La Palma.

Regarding phenology, Pavéz said that last year the plants had a chronological delay of about 10 days, but this year they are on schedule. "We had normal hours of cold, a very even sprouting and abundant flowering. Non the less, the weather was not so good during that period due to two rains during the flowering process. Despite all this, the fruit set was good but not so high as last season, but adequate in terms of production."

The impact of these rains, with a total of 37 mm in two events during the National Holyday was positive at the end. "This excess made for less fruit set, which meant less thinning".

Regarding the fruit millimeters, the expert says that "comparing the 48th week in 2023 with the same date of 2024 we have the same sizes, same calibers."



China gets more relevant as main destination of Chilean prunes

During the first 10 months of this year the exports of this superfood reached 77 countries totalizing 73,864 metric tons (MT), that is to say US\$ 209.

Exports of Chilean Prunes Accumulated			
January - September 2024			
N°	Country	Volume (Kg)	FOB in US\$
1	China	23.590.442	49.822.978
2	Poland	5.594.691	14.736.878
3	Mexico	4.995.647	13.492.536
4	USA	3.048.336	16.667.572
5	UK	2.697.353	7.673.278
6	Turkey	2.658.618	7.438.895
7	Germany	2.643.895	9.945.982
8	Spain	2.239.964	9.200.139
9	Australia	2.112.595	7.160.219
10	Italy	2.060.163	7.511.286
Source: Aduanas	Accumulated Total Exports Second Semester	51.641.704	143.649.762

From January to October 2024, according to data given by customs, it can be seen how China has become more important as main destination of Chilean prunes.

Until October 2023, exactly a year ago, the Asian giant with its 15, 188 metric tons (MT) almost tripled the shipments to Germany and Mexico, second and third importers of this Chilean superfood.

This year, the distance between China and the other importers got bigger; the volume of shipments during the period January-October 2024 reached 25,942 MT, while Poland and Mexico, second and third in the ranking do not exceed 7,000 MT, almost four times the shipments to the European country and exceeding four times the shipments to Mexico.

During the first 10 months of this year, the exports of prunes reached 77 countries, a total of 73,864 metric tons (MT), a total of US\$ 209 million. At the same time last year, we had 57,816 metric tons (MT) in shipments.

Other important destinations, from the five continents to where this fruit is sent, are the United States, Germany, Turkey, United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Australia. Poland is known as a good consumer but also as a good collection center that later sends prunes to neighborhood countries.

This information is given by Customs, an agency from the Chilean government. Because the total cultivated area with European plum is about 13 thousand hectares, Chile is able to produce more than 100,000 MT of plums per year; from this an important part is intended for fresh consumption, to be marketed in China, according to Chileprunes, trade association of processors and exporters of prunes in Chile; this trade association gathers more than 70% of the prune exports.

SIAL provides opportunities to connect with emerging actors from retail

Sebastián Plaza commercial manager from Frutexsa evaluated positively the participation of the Chilean delegation in the SIAL event, highlighting that it was an excellent opportunity to close sales and work the last available stocks in a context with less offer in comparison to the previous years.

Even though Frutexsa already has a solid network of customers in more than 60 countries, Plaza underlined that SIAL offers the opportunity to connect with emergent actors from the retail. Thus, for the company, he adds, the main goal from SIAL was to strengthen relationships with present customers and discuss business plans for the future more than to make direct sales.

This year, the event had news regarding the design with a new stand from



ProChile which improved privacy and the exposers experience. Even more, the Chilean pavilion was well positioned in an important area for the dried fruits and prunes, next to INC pavilion, attracting specialized buyers making it easier to hold strategic meetings with new importers. “Then, the customers walking by the stands were people that knew about the business; they knew it fully.”

The executive also talked about how this year has been and the expectations for next year.

“In general, the prunes were sold very fast this year. This is due to several factors, a key one the Chinese demand, a demand difficult to understand because last year they bought 18,000 tons and this year we calculate is will be 27, 000 tons”.

For 2025, we will depend on the harvest and the Chinese demand “which has proved to be very uneven for the prunes; their purchases fluctuate according to price expectations. Non the less, not considering China, the global market has shown signs or recuperation, with an active consumption and prices that have allowed to steady the demand”. In this context, Sebastián Plaza sees a favorable outlook for the prunes in the short term, with an improvement in the demand in key markets as Europe and America and other countries in Asia.

Around 80% of the Chilean prune exporting strength, represented by companies associated to Chileprunes, was present at SIAL and showed its satisfaction with the results of the event, the world most important event for the agri-food sector that can only be compared to Anuga (Germany) which takes place in odd years.

Successful event

SIAL, Paris, which took place in October, closed with a remarkable success attracting more than 285,000 professionals from the food sector from all over the world. This event is key for discovering innovations and emerging trends that define the future of nutrition globally.

Among the highlighted topics was the sustainability with many exposers focused in plant-based foods and solutions to reduce food waste. Also, there were new and healthy products like new kinds of fermented foods that took the center stage showing the interest in health and culinary culture in the world.

Moreover, SIAL prompted the conversation about technology in the food industry focusing in artificial intelligence to improve food safety and to manage the production in a more efficient way.

This event confirms the position of SIAL as one of the biggest global forums for the food industry and an essential place to anticipate the future of food and drinks.

Summit Agro Chile: Boosting prunes production in the country

With more than 10 years in Chile, Summit Agro Chile has excelled in the agricultural industry, offering innovative solutions for various crops.



As a subsidiary of Sumitomo Corporation, one of the eight largest companies in Japan, Summit Agro Chile has established itself as a leading company in the sale and marketing of agricultural inputs since its arrival in the national market in 2014. Its portfolio combines state-of-the-art Japanese agrochemical technology with products of Mexican origin and of other leading companies in agricultural solutions.

Committed to caring for the environment, Summit Agro also markets environmentally friendly products, strengthening its value proposition.

For plum tree cultivation, SummitAgro has a wide range of specialized solutions for their protection and biostimulation. Among the phytosanitary products are: Agrygent® Plus, a systemic bactericide to combat bacterial cancer; Mamull® which, with its fungicidal effect, protects crop wounds after pruning, while Puelche® WP controls grey rot in these pits. Other outstanding solutions from Summit Agro are: Oasis/Sunoff, a sunscreen that protects crops from high temperatures and radiation; Aminokippo® improves soil structure and oxygenation, Blackjack® promotes microbial activity and decreases soil salinity, and Ecklonar, an extract-based biostimulant of Ecklonia maxima, enhances the growth and size of the fruits with its high concentration of natural auxins and other active substances.

Training throughout the training process

SummitAgro is a leading company in the area of technologies, being Megadistributor of the company DJI Agriculture, of spray drones, offering high quality equipment and training throughout our country.

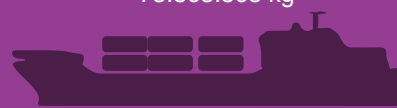
On the other hand, it offers AgriTech services, which provides various technological solutions in agriculture, such as, Soliscan®, detailed soil mapping; Toposcan®, high-precision topography; Canopyscan Drone®, thermal and multispectral canopy monitoring; Cropview®, a platform for integrating maps and field notebooks; among other services.

Thus, Summit Agro comprehensively supports the agricultural production of the plum crop in Chile, improving the yield and quality of the crops, while contributes to the development of a more sustainable and efficient agriculture.



Chilean industry indicators until October 2024

Exported volume
73.863.868 kg



Exported amount
209.920.349 US\$ FOB.



Main markets;



These 10 countries represent 79% of the volume inside of the 76 Chilean prunes destinations to date.

Source: Chilean Customs.

