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REPORT
—South Korea

Korean strawberries star in Malaysia

SEOUL—South Korean strawberry sales in Malaysia are hightailing on the popularity of K-Pop and South Korean culture.

by Gabrielle Easter



The Korean strawberry harvest is expected to kick off in November with exports from the middle of the month. Jeff Jun, founder of Korean exporter Top Fruit, says exports are looking to increase this season as a result of increased plantings.

"Last season, our packhouse opened and our first shipment was arranged on 15 November. I expect it will be almost the same this coming season," Jun tells ASIAFRUIT. "We are exporting Maehyang strawberries, which are not good for the domestic market, so we made a contract with growers to plant Maehyang strawberries and ship most of it overseas.

"Our growers have planted twice as much Maehyang strawberries as last season, so we're targeting 1,000 tonnes of strawberries to be exported this coming season."

The main exports markets for Korean strawberries are Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, with Top Fruit to trial exports to Vietnam this season. With around 3,000 tonnes of Korean strawberries exported last season, Jun says that targeting



Korean persimmon production has been on a par with last season, according to Top Fruit's Jeff Jun, with most packhouses opening from 20 October and peak harvest to run from 1 November until 10 November. Jun says Top Fruit is eyeing an export volume of 700 tonnes of persimmons.

1,000 tonnes in exports for his company will make it a significant season for the company that was established in 2013.

In Malaysia, one of the key export markets for Korean strawberries, marketer Euro Atlantic has plans to expand on its previous promotions, with the popularity of Korean culture and Korean pop music, also known as K-Pop, giving a boost to sales of Korean fresh produce as well.

Euro Atlantic will organise sampling activities, promotional events and roadshows with major retailers. Earlier this year, Euro Atlantic ran a promotion for consumers to win a trip to Korea, and, depending on the budget, the organisation is considering a nationwide contest for the coming season.

"Korean strawberries are one of our bigger scale promotions, hence consumers are always looking forward to the Korean strawberry season," explains Jasmine Ho, Euro Atlantic product and procurement manager.

"This year, we engaged with international food

artist Lee Samantha to run a nationwide contest that gave the winners a chance to enjoy a workshop with Lee Samantha during the prize-giving ceremony."

Ho says the high quality and affordable pricing of Korean fruit on top of the popularity of Korean goods has continued to drive sales, making Korean strawberries in particular more accessible to Malaysian consumers. **A**

KOREAN PEAR EXPORTS TO AUSTRALIA

South Korean pear exporters will resume shipments to Australia after a ban on pear exports was lifted in early October, according to Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. An outbreak of fire blight was reported in the growing regions of Anseong and Cheong in May, resulting in a nationwide ban on pear exports to Australia from 10 June 2015. Australian and South Korean officials agreed the contagious disease was being kept under control, with the system for reporting outbreaks deemed to be transparent. Exports are now able to resume from unaffected growing regions in Korea's south, such as Naju and Hadong, with the first shipment set to leave Korea in mid-October. Australia has imported small volumes of nashi pears from Korea since 1999, with 82 tonnes of pears imported in 2014, up 49 per cent from 2013.



OPPOSITE—Ebbey Loo of Euro Atlantic (left) with food artist Lee Samantha

ABOVE—Korean strawberries are one of Euro Atlantic's bigger promotions