

Australian apples gain technical market access to China

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Apple and Pear Australia Ltd (APAL) announced that the Australian apple industry has reached a significant milestone, with a new biosecurity protocol now signed to allow mainland apples to be exported to China.

The agreement, signed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the General Administration of Customs, China in Canberra, marks a significant step forward for Australian growers looking to expand into viable international markets.

Following several years of positive dialogue and engagement, exports of Australian mainland apples to China are set to commence in the 2026 season.

China market access presents a fantastic opportunity for the Australian apple industry, tapping into China's strong demand for premium, high-quality imported fresh fruit. Chinese consumers have a well-established preference for branded, high-quality fruit with exceptional freshness and flavour, aligning perfectly with Australia's reputation for superior apple production.

Australian mainland apples will now have the opportunity to build on the strong foundation established by Tasmania's successful exports to China, under a protocol that includes cold treatment for the management of fruit fly and ongoing recognition of the Tasmania fruit fly pest free area.

Apple and Pear Australia Limited CEO Philip Turnbull welcomed the new agreement, emphasising the potential for Australian growers to diversify and build a more competitive industry.

“Market access for Australian mainland apples into China is a significant milestone that will provide Australian growers with a valuable opportunity to expand beyond the domestic market and establish a presence in one of the world’s most lucrative fresh produce markets.”

“The Australian apple industry has traditionally been domestically focused. However, shifting supply and demand dynamics, coupled with increasing competition in the snack food category, mean that developing strong export pathways is more critical than ever. Access to China offers Australian growers an exciting opportunity to showcase the quality, crispness, and flavour of our apples to an entirely new audience,” said Philip Turnbull.

“The signing of this protocol is an important step forward, enhancing the industry’s competitiveness both internationally and domestically.”

The agreement will enable new season mainland apples to be exported from Australia into China in 2026.

While Tasmanian growers have already been exporting apples to China, this new agreement now opens doors for mainland Australian apple growers to access the Chinese market. This new export pathway to the high-value Chinese market presents a great opportunity for mainland apples, with Australian apple exports currently sitting at less than 1 per cent of the country’s domestic fresh apple production.

Market access for Australian mainland apples to China is part of APAL’s broader trade strategy funded by Hort Innovation using the apples and pear research and development levy and funds from the Australian government. Delivered by APAL, the *Apple and pear trade development and market access program* (AP23001) is a comprehensive program aimed at expanding market access, increasing engagement and understanding of trade, export capability and competitiveness, as well as ensuring the industry is ready to act swiftly if new markets open.