

INTERVIEW

—Ben Reilly, Steritech

Steritech promotes export

BRISBANE—Queensland’s Steritech has been irradiating Australian fresh produce exports since 2005. Fresh produce business manager Ben Reilly talks about the company’s impact in Indonesia.

by Phillip Morey

Which countries and what fruits have been treated by Steritech?

Ben Reilly: We are treating products including table grapes, tropicals, cherries, berries, citrus, summer fruits, melons, tomatoes and capsicum. These products are shipping to a growing number of markets including the US, New Zealand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Cook Islands.

In Asia, where are the opportunities for Steritech to assist Australian fruit exporters?

BR: Our greatest value to the industry is in creating a cold chain-friendly airfreight treatment for high-value perishable fruits.

In future, I see our ability to treat product in sealed packages becoming increasingly important, as packaging is relied on for branding, product quality, food safety and anti-counterfeiting measures.

What are some of the development plans for Steritech to assist fruit exporters?

BR: Steritech is opening a new X-ray/E-beam facility located in Melbourne, Australia’s largest horticultural distribution hub. Having

efficient access to this treatment in Melbourne will enhance both domestic and export opportunities for Australian growers.

In addition we are working on modification plans to our existing Sydney plant, which will provide a convenient phytosanitary treatment service for Australia’s busiest airport and regionally significant crops such as cherries and blueberries.

Which fruit categories are exporters targeting with irradiation in Indonesia?

BR: Almost every export protocol to Indonesia has an irradiation treatment option. Exporters choosing

irradiation for airfreight are able to ensure the cold chain is not broken prior to export, maximising shelf-life and quality.

Our Queensland facility is focused on treating berries, cherries and lemons for the Indonesian market. The production regions are in close proximity, and growers have told us that alternate treatments risk quality.

We are expecting to see increased volumes of grapes, summer fruit and cherries when the Melbourne X-ray facility opens in 2018.

How does Steritech help Australian growers gain effective market access?

BR: Steritech engages with industry, state and federal government to efficiently address phytosanitary barriers. We have a national irradiation strategy that incorporates multiple markets and crops.

Our experience with irradiation and the development of existing protocols is unique, allowing us to understand the federal negotiation processes and assist industry with supporting efforts.

We also engage with foreign industry and government to understand and assist with regulation development, education and market research.

Our overall focus with all of these efforts is to expedite efficient, effective protocol development for Australian growers and exporters. [A](#)

BELOW—Steritech’s Queensland facility is focused on treating produce such as berries for the Indonesian market

