

Zespri Expands RubyRed Kiwifruit to 16 Markets, Volumes Surge to 5Mn Trays

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New Zealand's Zespri is significantly scaling up the availability of its premium RubyRed kiwifruit this season, with more than five million trays, equivalent to around 18,000 tonnes, set to reach consumers across 16 international markets.

The increased supply, up from three million trays last year, reflects the transition of more orchards into full commercial production. As part of its expansion strategy, the company is introducing RubyRed kiwifruit to new markets, including Australia, Vietnam, and Canada, marking the first time consumers in these regions will have access to the variety.

Zespri CEO Jason Te Brake said the early-season variety continues to build strong consumer traction and plays a strategic role in driving early momentum for the company's annual sales cycle.

"RubyRed kiwifruit is the first of our varieties harvested each season, helping generate excitement and secure early shelf space ahead of our SunGold and Green kiwifruit," he said, noting strong sales performance and positive market feedback in previous seasons.

The company is also deepening its presence in North America. Following a successful rollout in the United States last year, RubyRed volumes to the US are expected to triple this season, with retail sales beginning in mid-April. Expansion into Canada marks a further step in strengthening Zespri's footprint in the region.

In Asia, Zespri is increasing volumes in key markets such as China and Japan, with early sales in China showing particularly strong demand. An initial shipment of 25,000 trays in Shanghai sold out rapidly, supported by digital commerce channels including Douyin, where several days' worth of traditional sales were completed within hours.

RubyRed kiwifruit is typically available for a limited eight-week window due to its shorter shelf life. Known for its distinctive red flesh and sweet, berry-like flavour, the fruit contains naturally occurring antioxidants such as anthocyanins, along with key nutrients including folate, potassium, and vitamins C and E. The variety is also helping attract younger consumers to both the kiwifruit and broader fruit categories.

To support continued growth, Zespri has introduced an additional red cultivar, Red80, which was commercialised in late 2025. Harvested slightly later than the existing Red19 variety and offering improved storage life, Red80 is expected to extend the selling season and enhance supply continuity under the RubyRed brand.

The company plans to release 100 hectares of Red80 licences to growers in May 2026, with commercial-scale volumes anticipated by 2028, positioning Zespri to meet rising global demand for premium red kiwifruit.