An international freighter laden with a portion of New Zealand’s latest kiwifruit season arrived on April 10 at Taizhou Port in Zhejiang province.

At the Port of Taizhou, Bruns, Canada — a longtime kiwi grower, chairman of Zespri, and a proponent of the nation’s growers — said he had little time to celebrate as he watched the cargo being loaded for Taizhou. He said he looked forward to every Chinese consumer being able to try the cooperative’s fruit.

“Over 2,000 containers loaded on 20 vessels will be shipped to China once a month. In the next few years, we plan to double the amount to satisfy the appetite of more Chinese consumers,” Zespri said.

Over the past 20 years, Zespri has fostered good relations with China’s business partners. In November, Zespri was named an Authorized Exporter, a certification that would help improve China’s Administration of Customs and make it easier for Chinese businesses to export.

China accounts for 23 percent of Zespri’s partner share of its kiwi exports. Canada has promised to put closer attention to health regulations and strictly abide by the requirements of quarantine inspection and risk control, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the 1990s, Zespri began cultivating a new variety of kiwis, developed through a natural breeding process and aimed at improving the quality of China’s fruit industry. The new yellow fleshed gold variety had a less furry outside skin, and is known as the world’s best-tasting kiwi.

In 2021, the production of Zespri’s kiwi crop was 900 million yuan ($140 million), up 27 percent year-on-year. By 2024, its value is expected to reach 1.3 billion yuan, the local government said.

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Over the past 10 years, China has imported more than 10,000 tons of kiwis from Zespri. Despite the pandemic, China-Zespri trade has grown, according to the country’s economic ties have been strengthened. Meanwhile, the Zespri has been establishing a new variety of kiwis, which has a history of some 1,300 years of cultivation. The fruit and is looking forward to continue expanding.

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