





When it comes to food, it's obvious that today's consumers are becoming more conscious of what they eat. With an increasing demand for fresh produce, countries which are not able to grow it themselves, are looking to import. This is where Australia comes in, specially, Australia Fruits. Australia Fruits was founded in 2003 by Joe Tullio and is headquartered North of Melbourne's CDB in Epping, Victoria.

With a wealth of experience in fresh fruit and vegetable sourcing, Joe started off consolidating orders in Melbourne as well as air freighting produce to customers in South East Asia. As demand grew, Joe began working directly with leading produce growers, distributors and partners who shared his vision for quality. Joe also had a vision to become the most

complete Australian export marketer, providing outstanding customer service and creating value for his suppliers.

In 2005, Vince Brullo joined the company as an Export Manager to help service clients in new markets. Today, Australia Fruits has grown significantly and serves leading supermarkets and distributors in over twenty countries across the globe. Their supply partners include top tier Australian fruit growers who have given them exclusive rights to market their brands overseas. We speak with Joe and Vince to gain some insight into Australia Fruits.

"Part of what differentiates us from our competitors, moving forward, would be that we have a new logistics facility where we handle

everything ourselves." Says Vince. This new facility allows the company to handle everything from packaging, inspecting and loading without a third party. "So compared to other exporters in Australia, we have control over all our products in a temperature controlled facility, where we inspect the fruit that comes into our warehouse." Adds Joe. The team is able to run a personal quality check. "I believe we are one of the only exporters to do that." States Vince.

So what exactly does come into their facility? Australia Fruits exports an extensive selection of fruits and vegetables, some with numerous varieties. Amongst others, their lineup includes apricots, asparagus, avocados, berries, broccoli, carrots, cherries, grapes, lemons, mangoes, onions, oranges, peaches, potatoes, pears and apples.

"As we buy direct from our growers, we have

some great relationships with them. When we buy their products to export overseas, not only do we export to high end countries like China and Singapore but also to countries in the Middle East that are a very different market." Says Joe. This has Australia Fruits not just picking and choosing fruit from a grower, but instead buying all their fruit. "Not every piece of fruit on the tree is a premium piece of fruit, so we try to take the whole range." Adds Joe.

Australia is recognised as the clean and green growing capital of the southern hemisphere. With Asia right next door, there is a huge demand for Australian grown produce. "We are proud to be part of the industry that is able to provide a consistent supply of quality products to these markets. A big part of maintaining this is our staff. The fresh produce industry is totally reliant upon the skills and knowledge of its staff." Advises Joe.





Quality Vegetables

Fragapane Farms is the vegetable production and distribution arm of the family owned and operated business that was founded by Giuseppe Fragapane.

Fragapane Farms has built a reputation for supplying our customers with the highest quality fresh vegetables. Our markets include the wholesale central markets, local and interstate, various retailers and export customers.

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Whether live, fresh or frozen our highly trained team and state of the art facilities ensure you receive visibility, control and flexibility in your perishable supply chain to any destination, worldwide.

We understand the quality and demands of fruits reaching the shelves on time so we work with you to package and ship your cargo ensuring minimal handling and the fastest transit times.

EXPORTS

- Buyers consolidation – consolidate multiple sender consignments and deliver to one or multiple consignees on arrival
- Approved quarantine export establishment

IMPORTS

- Customs clearance with quarantine approved premises
- Cross docking
- Distribution
- Fumigation



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In a very volatile industry, there are few major issues that Joe and Vince have to face at any given time. "The first, would be currency, which plays a big part in the way we trade. If the rates are not in our favor we find it difficult to do the numbers we like to do. The second would be supply, which is based on the weather. If the weather turns on our growers and negatively affects their crops, it also affects our business. The last issue would be international market access. If we lose a market, it could mean millions of dollars of turnover which we've built up over the years, gone overnight. We've had a few incidents like that in the way of Russia, Vietnam and Indonesia." Explains Vince and Joe. For example, Indonesia, a country looking to be more self-sufficient, has changed its protocol to allow Australia only certain time windows to supply. Restrictions such as this, has made Indonesia a difficult market to penetrate, especially when dealing with perishable goods.

"From start to finish we handle, package and load our containers with QA (Quality Assurance). We are at the stage where we can allow our growers to package the fruit. This way, when they arrive at our facility, we check for quality and appropriately label them. This is a big marketing tool for us moving forward." Says Vince. "We will also be offering this service to a small amount of chosen exporters. We can offer them a service which they are not use to. So we will be doing a little bit of service providing as well. This is the main item on our agenda moving forward into 2016." Advises Joe.

Prior to teaming up, Vince and Joe had a great business relationship. "I used to be a freight forwarder and Joe was actually a good customer of mine." Explains Vince. At the time, Joe was handling all aspects of the business himself. "He was so busy that when I visited him, I had to make my own coffee. I mentioned to him that he needed a partner because he was too busy. Joe turned around and offered



me a position, so in 2005 I joined the company and we've been like brothers ever since." Says Vince happily.

Both Joe and Vince are also involved in the industry, with Joe being an executive member of the AHEA (Australian Horticultural Exporters' Association). "We are here to provide a service to Australian growers so they can keep growing along with the Australian economy. We aren't focused just on Australia Fruits but also the whole industry. We believe that in the future the food supply chain in Australia can be very profitable and can make a difference not only for growers and exporters, but also for the Australian workforce." States Joe. "The food industry in the next 5 years will grow tremendously. The growing number of middle income earners in Asia and the Middle East want safe, fresh and high quality food and Australia should capitalise on this." Adds Vince.



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