

**VIETRADE** - Australia is one of the major market for Vietnam's agro-aquatic products with the export growth rate reaching 8.3%/year and the annual average revenue of about US\$ 450 million/year in the period of 2011-2016. Having identified the potentials of exporting agro-aquatic products to Australia, during the past time, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam (MOIT) has coordinated with other relevant ministries and sectors to carry out many measures to promote export from Vietnam to this market.

After signing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA), with the import duty reducing to 0% as soon as the agreement came into effects in 2010, agro-aquatic product exports from Vietnam to Australia increased significantly in the period of 2011-2016 (for example, vegetables and fruits reaching 27.7%/year, cashew nuts 12.9%/year, aquatic products 6.9%/year, etc.). This thereby has contributed to boosting export growth of the whole country compared to the period before the AANZFTA took effects.

### **Efforts in removing technical barriers**

MOIT has been actively cooperating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in removing the technical barriers to open Australian market for the entry of Vietnam's prawns and fresh fruits. Although the negotiation process for each of the items is difficult and takes time (usually 5-10 years; 12 years for lychees; 7 years for mangos), so far we have been able to access the Australian market for lychees (2015) and mangos (2016) as well as pave the way for other fresh fruits of Vietnam.

For prawns, recently, soon after Australia released an announcement on stopping the import of

some uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat products from Vietnam (since 09 Jan 2017), MOIT and MARD have put a lot of efforts in removing the barriers. After 4 times of announcing on the loosening of the import moratorium mentioned above, on May 31, 2017, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources of Australia (DAWR) removed 7 uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat products of Vietnam from the temporary suspension order.

Also, according to the latest announcement from DAWR, from June 15, 2017, DAWR will accept applications for importing uncooked prawns naturally caught in Australia and exported to Vietnam for processing and then being re-exported to Australia. This is a positive step of the Australian government and also a great success of Vietnamese ministries, sectors, industry associations and enterprises in removing barriers and supporting to re-open the Australian market for Vietnamese prawn products during the past half year.

### **Vietnam's dragon fruits will soon be available in Australia**

After paving the way for Vietnamese lychees and mangos to enter Australia, MOIT and MARD are actively working with DAWR in order to export some other Vietnamese fresh fruits (dragon fruits, rambutans, star apples, longans) to this market. First, it is important to complete import procedures for dragon fruits. Dragon fruits are one of key exports of Vietnam with the export value in 2016 reaching US\$ 895.7 million, accounting for 50.3% of the total export of fresh fruits and 36.1% of the total export of fruits and vegetables of our country.

At the bilateral meeting with the Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment on May 21, 2017 on the occasion of the 23rd Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade, the Vietnamese Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh exchanged and discussed a lot of contents on trade cooperation with Australia and also requested Australia to facilitate and allow

Vietnamese fresh dragon fruits to enter this market.

On June 15, 2017, the Australian Embassy in Vietnam issued an official letter to the Vietnamese Minister of Industry and Trade to provide updates on the progress of opening the Australian market for the Vietnamese fresh dragon fruits and also to offer assistance for Vietnam to obtain permission from Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for using food irradiation technique for Vietnamese fresh dragon fruits to be exported to Australia. MOIT has also had written communication with MARD on this issue so that the two ministries can cooperate with each other to complete the procedures for opening the Australian market for Vietnam's fresh dragon fruits, which is expected to start in 2017.

So far, the Vietnam Trade Office in Australia has developed a plan to promote dragon fruit exports in this country. According to this plan, it is important to collect all information about demand, tastes, standards, quality regulations, distribution network approach, etc. of the Australian market to support Vietnamese enterprises to take advantages of dragon fruit export opportunities right after they have been able to access this market.

Regarding the supports for connection with and trade promotion in the Australian market, as soon as having opened the market, in order to directly introduce and advertise Vietnam's agro-aquatic products to consumers in the land of kangaroos, the Vietnam Trade Office in Australia has been actively exchanging and working with the *Australian Horticultural Exporters Association*

(*AHEA*), the *Australian Retailers Association*

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and overseas Vietnamese large enterprises in Australia to conduct trade promoting and connecting activities. These include the organization of events "Vietnamese Lychee Day in

Melbourne”, “Vietnamese Lychee Week in Sydney”, the campaign "Vietnamese people prioritize made-in-Vietnam products" in the areas where there are big Vietnamese communities, as well as the publication of films and promotional products in English about Vietnam’s high-quality agro-aquatic products (mangos, lychees, seafood, etc.).

In the coming time, in addition to trade promotion, advertisement, market development through negotiations to remove technical barriers, etc., MOIT will cooperate with relevant agencies in seeking and introducing large Australian corporations to Vietnam so that these corporations can transfer suitable advanced agricultural technology models of Australian to the practical needs of Vietnam. It is also important to continue market research in order to identify suitable and potential products of Vietnam for export to Australia; as well as to support Vietnamese enterprises to participate directly in the Australian wholesale and retail distribution networks to ensure that more Vietnamese agro-aquatic products will be able to penetrate deeper into this market.