

SE EARLY GENERAL NEWS
HD **Conference builds stronger China links**

BY JACINTA BOLSENBROEK

WC 769 words

PD 3 April 2014

SN Farm Weekly

SC FFARMW

PG 16

LA English

CY Copyright 2014 Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited. . Not available for re-distribution.

LP

REPRESENTATIVES from **China** will visit Perth to strengthen **business** ties in agriculture next week.

The Perth-based Western Australia-**China** Agribusiness Co-operation Conference will provide businesses with the opportunity to network and enhance relationships across the agriculture and food industry.

TD

Department of Agriculture and Food director general Rob Delane said the conference's key aim was to attract strategic investors, with access to money and markets, who could inject capital into growing the supply chain to support the production levels required to meet growing market demand.

"We hope to get a better...and a stronger understanding, because relationships are critical in **China**," Mr Delane said.

"At the end of the day it's about **business** match-making. "We will be facilitating linking **Chinese** investors, with specific or general interest, up with WA businesses or professional service providers who may be able to help link them up to that opportunity in WA."

Chinese representative Jeff Ji, senior product manager at **China** Minsheng Banking Corporation, told Farm Weekly, Australia had a good reputation for its high quality food and **dairy** among **Chinese** consumers, however WA was not as well known to **Chinese** citizens.

"The conference will help these organisations (banks and corporations) to better understand the **business** opportunities and how **business** operates in WA," Mr Ji said.

"This conference opens a gate to many **Chinese** companies and financial institutions and is a good opportunity for us to better understand Australian agribusiness as well as to let the market know our capability."

WA has an export-based agriculture and food sector, with about 80 per cent of production **sold** to international markets, including **China**.

There is a strong interest in a range of areas which will be explored during this conference, including beef, **wine** and **dairy**.

Other focus areas will include grains, fodder such as cereal hay, and horticulture, premium food and fisheries.

China ranked as one of WA's biggest markets for agriculture and food products in 2012-13, with exports valued at more than \$1 **billion**, led by wool, barley, canola, wheat, sheep skins and **wine**.

On his visit, Mr Ji hopes to build **business** relationships, understand how WA businesses operate and explore potential opportunities in Perth.

"We hope to strengthen the relationship with the existing clients by providing them with more professional service and deal opportunities," Mr Ji said.

Mr Ji said he thought Australia represented a great opportunity for **China** as **Chinese** consumers were now willing to pay more for better quality product, but the supply of high quality food and **dairy** products was limited.

"Food safety is always an issue to **Chinese** consumers," Mr Ji said.

"The local media has reported many food safety problems (in **China**), which caused great concerns to the community.

"With the increase of domestic disposable income and market globalisation, **Chinese** consumers have better information and access to foreign products and have started to pay more attention to food quality.

"Australia is well known for its good environment, protein and **dairy** products, which are always attractive to **Chinese** consumers."

The DAFWA is welcoming the foreign investment opportunity.

Mr Delane said it would have been magnificent if more large-scale investment could come from within WA or Australia.

"But that seems unlikely for this scale," Mr Delane said.

"So where better for it to come from, than from the market destination where those investors are responding to the population and wealth **group** in those communities and are interested in building food supply chains from within WA.

"How can you grow from a small episodic supplier, to one that can be a reliable supplier of much high quantity? You are going to need investment from somewhere.

"There is a huge marketing opportunity in Asia and the Middle East, so we have to include our focus on **China** to grow together."

About 300 delegates registered for the April 9 event, including about 170 delegates representing government and **business** interests in **China**.

The **Chinese** delegates come from the provinces of Zhejiang, Shanghai and Jiangsu, Shandong, Liaoning, Jiangxi, Henan, Anhui and Shaanxi.

The conference is hosted by DAFWA and supported by the InvestWest Agribusiness Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australia-**China Business** Council, the Department of State Development, the Department of Regional Development and the **Chinese** Consulate.

Delegates will hear from industry leaders on topics such as global trends in agribusiness, **Chinese** investment in WA, infrastructure projects and WA agribusiness investment opportunities.

Customised, industry-specific field visits will be offered on April 10-11.

IN i01001 : Farming | i0 : Agriculture

NS c315 : Conferences/Exhibitions | c31 : Marketing | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpin : FC&E Industry News Filter

RE china : China | austr : Australia | waustr : Western Australia | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | bric : BRIC Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

PUB Fairfax Media Management Pty Limited

AN Document FFARMW0020140402ea4300012