

SE	EARLY GENERAL NEWS
HD	WA to benefit from China's online trend
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LP	<p>BLOGGING about food, taking photos of our food and food reviews are the way of the future for consumers.</p> <p>After travelling to China, Department of Agriculture and Food director general Rob Delane said WA's food companies will have to look at getting more involved in the online world.</p>
TD	<p>"There is a shift towards online, we saw that (on the recent trip)," Mr Delane said.</p> <p>"Every food company is moving very quickly into online; into online transactions, online import and export, online selling which includes direct to customers, and fresh products."</p> <p>Everything from crabs and other meat products can all be purchased online.</p> <p>Mr Delane said it was reported in China, that sales of fresh produce and seafood had risen to \$4.5 billion, not a large scale in Chinese terms, but it was growing at 100-200 per cent a year.</p> <p>Mr Delane said the generational change has come about, as the youth of today spent most of their time online.</p> <p>"The market is changing the youth in China are more active online," Mr Delane said.</p> <p>"The consumer powers are growing, with social media platforms like WeChat and other apps, providing a forum for customers to seek and provide referrals and recommendations about products and suppliers."</p> <p>Mobile phone apps and social networking groups, including WeChat, provide a free and open source of communication, sending photos, reviews and opinions of consumers to the public or other users.</p> <p>Mr Delane said customers were looking for food they could trust and were trusting food reviews.</p> <p>"There are not many WA food companies that are directly involved in that," he said.</p> <p>"There are a lot of food companies (in China) that are following the trend.</p> <p>"It's an opportunity for WA companies, be it producing wine or fine food, or broader bulk commodities that could line up with big companies that are operating online."</p> <p>DAFWA is now looking at ways in which it can assist WA companies supplying the Chinese markets and how a program such as Buy West, Eat Best could fit into this space.</p> <p>Buy West, Eat Best already provides WA consumers and the local food industry with a food-specific brand to clearly identify WA grown, farmed, fished and produced food products.</p>

WA businesses apply to the DAFWA to use the logo, and they must meet all of the criteria before they can be registered.

But Mr Delane said it seems to be more interactive than online grocery shopping.

Mr Delane said consumers are using online to share good food options.

"In part, it's because people in **China** are looking for food to trust," Mr Delane said.

"They trust the collective social network, more than companies or suppliers."

IN i01001 : Farming | i0 : Agriculture

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

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