

SE **Business**
 HD **Organic industry gets Chinese boost**
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The \$1.3 **billion** organic food and **wine** industry is set to gain a \$100 **million**-plus lift after the umbrella body won **Chinese** approval to certify export produce in Australia.

The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia estimates it could add up to \$100 **million** in extra sales annually for local operators because it will give easier access to the **Chinese** market, and lead to lower costs for local producers who will get their paperwork signed off in Australia first, after checks by inspectors approved by **Chinese** authorities.

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Ben Copeman, the general manager of the association, said it is the first time a foreign organisation had secured approval to inspect organic products for export to **China**.

"It's very good from a lowering costs viewpoint, and very good from a market access viewpoint," Copeman says.

He says it will allow Australian organic producers the same access to the highly regulated **Chinese** organic market as they currently have to the organic markets in the United States, Japan and Europe.

An official agreement was signed in Adelaide on Monday between the association and the **Chinese** organic certification body Beijing WuYue HuaXia Management and Technique Centre.

CHC chairman Zhou Chen said on Monday at the signing: "It's a big market opportunity for Australian operators."

Copeman says Australia is one of the top three suppliers of organic foods to **China**, along with the United States and Europe. He estimates up to \$120 **million** of organic produce is already **sold** into **China** from Australian producers.

Food security and the quality and integrity of the supply chain is increasingly a major issue in **China**, which has been hit by health scares related to infant formula for feeding young babies and toddlers. **Wine** benefits

Paxton Wines, a **wine** producer from South Australia's McLaren Vale region, aims to increase its exports into **China** through the deal.

Ben Paxton, from the family-owned winery, said exports to **China** make up about 5 per cent of the **group's** total exports. He says drinkers expect quality **wine**, and only then is the organic status a factor in their purchasing decisions. "The quality of the **wine** is what sells it, being organic is a bonus," he says.

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