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# Jazz apples go strong in France

**NATHAN GUY**

**OPINION**

**N**ot so long ago I visited an orchard growing delicious New Zealand jazz apples in an unlikely location – the Le Mans region of France, about an hour out of Paris on a fast train.

The jazz apple was first developed by ENZA in the 1980s and has been a big hit in France. Commercial orchards began planting it in 2003 and there are now more than 1.3 million trees in France.

It's a great example of co-operation between ourselves and our trading partners. Having these apples grown in the northern hemisphere gives the advantage of seasonality, meaning we can supply the hungry market of China all year round.

ENZA has a global strategy to increase global production of jazz apples to 20 million cartons by 2020. Of this, eight or nine million are likely to come from the southern hemisphere, including New Zealand, so clearly there will need to be growth in European production as well.

I visited the orchard as a guest of French Agriculture Minister Stephane Le Foll who was very impressed and could see the benefits of working together. For example, French producers can tap into New Zealand's distribution links into Asia.

During my trip to Europe I promoted this as a good example of the benefits of a free trade deal for co-operation, not just competition. You can see this happening already with European companies like Baywa, Danone and Moet

investing here, and our companies like Fonterra and Gallagher investing in Europe.

There is still a long road ahead for this FTA and it won't be easy, so visits like mine will be important to keep pushing this and getting our messages across.

It was encouraging to see the comments of French Prime Minister Manuel Valls when he visited New Zealand in early May, the first visit by a French PM in 25 years. He said that France supports free trade "... providing concessions are mutual, trade agreements are fair and balanced and tariff barriers effectively lifted."

Also important is the TPP which will deliver major benefits. The estimated savings for our fruit and vegetable exports are around \$34 million a year once implemented, and that is a conservative estimate as we know from experience overall trade levels are likely to rise. For example, the FTA with Chinese Taipei saw the value of apple exports increase by 200 per cent over two years, and also big gains for cherry exports (150 per cent) and kiwifruit (24 per cent) over the same period.

Overall the horticulture industry is one of the stars of the New Zealand economy and the 2015/16 year is expected to see a record \$4.8 billion in horticultural exports.

Among the many outstanding results is that apple exports have passed \$500 million for the first time.

■ Nathan Guy is the Minister for Primary Industries.