



MEDIA RELEASE

CHERRY GROWERS SET FOR SMOOTH SAILING WITH JESSICA WATSON

Hopes are running red-hot for a fantastic Aussie cherry season this year with ideal growing conditions setting the scene for a bumper crop come November and teen sailing sensation and Young Australian of the Year Jessica Watson onboard to help promote the sweet harvest.

A full soil profile combined with a good amount of rain and a cool winter has helped cherry blossoms develop beautifully, with the industry hoping for smooth sailing ahead after bad weather damaged many crops last season around Australia.

Like cherry growers, the new face of the industry knows all about the importance of determination and good weather. Jessica is hoping for a strong dose of both as she endeavours to complete this year's Sydney to Hobart yacht race as skipper of the youngest ever crew, with cherries fuelling her voyage.

"Australian cherries are one of my favourite snacks – they are absolutely delicious, healthy and great value for money," Jessica said.

"Cherries are also a good source of Vitamin C, contain no fat or cholesterol and are packed with antioxidants," she said.

"Our growers work really hard to produce high quality fruit so it's important we cherish every moment of the short but delectably sweet season, which only lasts for around 100 days. I know I will be!"

President of Cherry Growers Australia, Andrew Smith, said the industry was keen to highlight the tasty benefits of eating cherries, with all signs pointing to an excellent season ahead.

"Top quality, juicy Aussie cherries will hit shelves from November through to February, with supply peaking in December and January," said Mr Smith.

"We have around 2,845 hectares under production across six states and should harvest between 13,000 to 15,000 tonnes of cherries this year, 80 percent of this for the domestic market, so consumers will be able to enjoy great value, top notch produce every day of the season," he said.

"Cherries are a true superfruit packed with nutrients and, kilo for kilo, they stack up as a fantastic value option against other superfruits like fresh berries, products such as those made from goji, noni and acai, and processed treats like chocolate bars and crisps. This makes them the ideal summer snack."

Fantastic eaten on their own – perfect for a platter in the middle of a summer table – cherries also team well with dark chocolate, enhance any dessert and add an excellent counterbalance to traditional savoury dishes such as grilled fish, roast duck and lamb, making them a great addition to everyday cooking.

There are many varieties grown across six states domestically, the most popular being the Merchant, Bing, Supreme, Empress, Stella, Lapin, Sweetheart, Simone, Kordia, Van and Ron's Seedling.

Key growing regions include Young, Orange and Bathurst in New South Wales, the Dandenong Ranges, Goulburn Valley, central and north east regions of Victoria, the Adelaide Hills and the Riverland area of South Australia, Northern Tasmania, the Huon Valley and Derwent Valley in Tasmania, the elevated south west region of Western Australia and Stanthorpe in Queensland.

Cherry Health Notes:

- **A true “super fruit”** – Emerging studies suggest phytonutrients found in cherries may have the ability to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and even alleviate gout and arthritis pain.
- **Antioxidant advantage** – Cherries are a power-packed food loaded with certain *anthocyanins*, the antioxidants responsible for their deep red colour – and other flavonoid antioxidants such as quercetin and kaempferol.
- **Beauty Buzz** – Cherries may also play a potential role in slowing the signs of skin ageing. Free radicals are believed to contribute to the production of fine lines and wrinkles by destroying the collagen and elastin network which keeps skin supple and firm. Eating foods rich in antioxidants, such as cherries, may help reduce and neutralise these free radicals. This is particularly important during summer when the skin is exposed to significantly higher levels of UV radiation from the sun which can be harsh and damage skin tissue, leading to premature skin wrinkling.
- **Essential Nutrients** – Cherries provide a good source of Vitamin C and are a source of potassium and fibre.

For more on cherries or to download The Australian Cherry Report, visit the Australian Cherries website: www.cherries.com.au

Social Media Updates:

- Like Jessica Watson and Crossman Communications on Facebook to receive regular updates on the season and campaign.
- Follow @watsonjessica and @CrossmanComms on Twitter for regular season updates.
- Discuss the upcoming Australian cherry season on Twitter using #AussieCherries and #Jess4Cherries hashtags.

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