AgroSpectrum ASIA
Envisaging Future | Updating Present

New Zealand's Zespri reinforces Kiwi fruit shipment to Japan and South Korea

23 March 2026 | News

750,000 trays, or 2,700 tonnes, of Zespri SunGoldâ?¢ Kiwifruit, as well as 760,000 trays, or 2,790 tonnes, of Zespri RubyRedâ?¢,

750,000 trays, or 2,700 tonnes, of Zespri SunGoldâ?¢ Kiwifruit, as well as 760,000 trays, or 2,790 tonnes, of Zespri RubyRedâ?¢,

Zespriâ??s has launched it s first charter shipment of the season from Port of Tauranga bounded to Japan and South Korea markets. The Whero is carrying more than 750,000 trays, or 2,700 tonnes, of Zespri SunGoldâ?¢ Kiwifruit, as well as 760,000 trays, or 2,790 tonnes, of Zespri RubyRedâ?¢, with the vessel due to arrive in Tokyo at the end of the month before sailing on to Kobe, with its final destination Busan in South Korea.

Zespriâ??s second charter of the season, Kowhai, is also set to depart in the coming days from Tauranga and sail to Shanghai in China.

These are the first of 60 charter vessels Zespri will use this season to ship another expected record crop from New Zealand of around 220 million trays, or 792,000 tonnes, of Zespri Green, SunGoldâ?¢ and RubyRedâ?¢ Kiwifruit to more than 50 markets around the world.

Charter vessels allow Zespri to carry more fruit and provide greater certainty by sailing directly to market without calling on other ports en route, with remaining volume shipped using container services.

CEO Jason Te Brake says the departure of the first charter is always a milestone moment for the industry.

â??Thereâ??s always a lot of pride in getting our first ship away and the Wheroâ??s departure marks an important step in the work weâ??ll do this season to deliver another large crop of high quality Zespri Kiwifruit to our markets.

â??Recent global developments highlight that weâ??re operating in an increasingly complex and unpredictable environment. While Zespri continues to use the Panama Canal for shipping to Europe, we are closely monitoring the evolving situation and the impact on oil prices to manage the impact as well as we can for growers and shareholders.

â??Each season we work closely with our long standing shipping partners to get our fruit to market and we remain confident in our shipping plan which uses a mix of container and charter vessels. Weâ??re working with our partners to have appropriate contingencies in place to respond to what we expect will remain an uncertain environment, to ensure weâ??re positioned to deliver the season well.Â

â??Our customers in market are looking forward to receiving fruit this season to meet strong demand. Our sales teams have also been preparing marketing campaigns to support a strong start to the season and to help maximise the value returned to growers.â?•

Zespriâ??s first charter vessel to Europe for the 2026/27 season is expected to depart Tauranga in the coming week.Â Â