

29 April 2022

Australia-UAE CEPA Coordinator
 Middle East FTAs Branch
 Regional Trade Agreements Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
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RE: Submission to Australia-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

Dear Australia-UAE CEPA Coordinator,

AUSVEG welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the development of Australia-United Arab Emirates CEPA.

AUSVEG is the national peak industry body for Australia’s over 3,500 vegetable and potato producers, who account for 3.83 million tonnes of vegetable production worth AUD\$4.9 billion in farmgate value and over AUD\$5 billion in retail value annually, which accounts for one third of Australia’s AUD\$15 billion horticulture industry.

The Australian vegetable industry is a key regional and rural employer, with tens of thousands of people employed in vegetable producing businesses across the country. Increasing Australian vegetable exports contributes to the long-term viability and prosperity of the sector and its ability to continue to be a significant regional employer and economic contributor.

On behalf of the Australian vegetable industry, AUSVEG would like to express support for the government’s efforts to liberalise trade, strengthen and deepen trading relationship between countries, create opportunities, and add value for exporters.

The Australian vegetable industry has been a long-term trading partner with the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates is the second top export destination for Australian vegetables for over a decade and has always been an important market for Australian vegetable exporters. In 2021, Australia exported AUD\$32 million and 34,634 tonnes of fresh vegetables to the United Arab Emirates, with top three export crops being onions, potatoes, and carrots (refer to Table 1 and Figure 1).

Description	2019		2020		2021	
	AUD\$	Tonnes	AUD\$	Tonnes	AUD\$	Tonnes
Total Fresh Vegetable Exports to UAE	\$31,725,408	40,518	\$33,982,716	35,933	\$32,072,117	34,634
Carrots	\$ 24,012,688	28,397	\$ 26,798,174	30,671	\$ 26,151,999	30,221
Potatoes	\$ 3,025,475	9,366	\$ 2,205,568	1,639	\$ 2,120,886	1,717
Onions	\$ 1,611,717	1,921	\$ 2,632,036	3,023	\$ 1,789,164	2,157
Celery	\$ 679,402	257	\$ 804,887	285	\$ 851,267	312
Asparagus	\$ 2,100	0	\$ 18,725	2	\$ 154,535	17
Cauliflowers & Broccoli	\$ 1,065,168	283	\$ 114,952	14	\$ 74,284	8
Pumpkins	\$ 118,856	57	\$ 62,854	15	\$ 63,117	17
Spinach	\$ 63,560	9	\$ 56,835	8	\$ 42,107	6
Tomatoes,	\$ 279	0			\$ 28,665	28
Salad Beets	\$ 24,977	9	\$ 145,576	36	\$ 19,993	3

Table 1: Australian Fresh Vegetable Exports to UAE 2019 to 2021, Source: Global Trade Atlas 2022

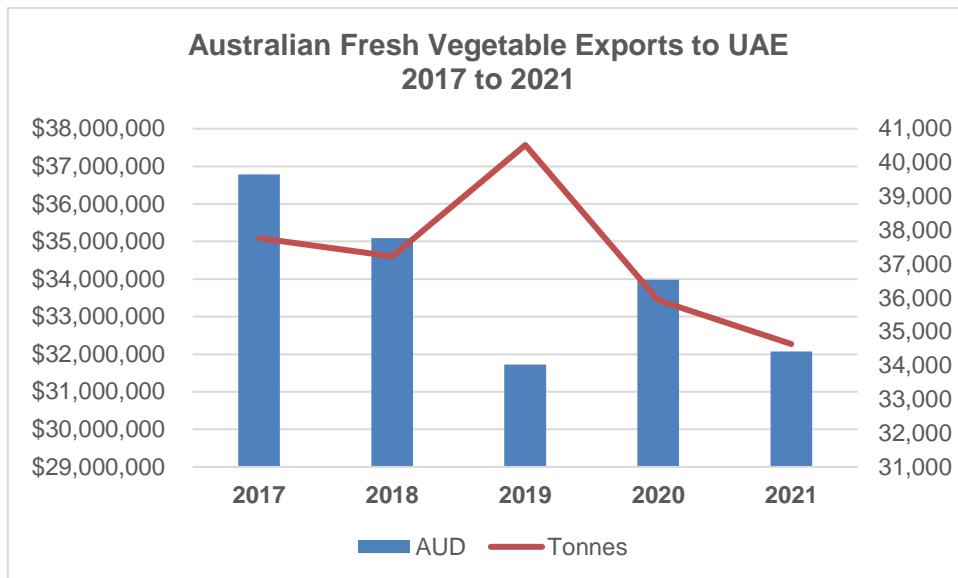


Figure 1: Australian Fresh Vegetable Exports to UAE 2019 to 2021, Source: Global Trade Atlas 2022

While the United Arab Emirates market currently provides tariff-free trade in most fresh vegetables, the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE will secure the bi-lateral trade arrangements effectively over the longer term. Locking in zero tariffs for fresh vegetable trade will underpin and strengthen the Australian vegetable industry's trade into this market and increase the industry ability to trade competitively in the United Arab Emirates vegetable market ongoing.

In 2018, the UAE government launched the *National Food Security Strategy 2051* with the aim to achieve zero hunger by ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year around from trading partners throughout the world. The strategy specifies the need to develop international partnerships to diversify food sources, which will be achievable through the CEPA.

In summary, AUSVEG supports development of a future Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Australia and the United Arab Emirates, the trade liberalisation agenda of the current government, and further attempts at expanding FTAs in the future.

For more information regarding this submission, please contact me on +61 3 9882 0277 or email Michael.coote@ausveg.com.au.

Yours sincerely

Michael Coote
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