



Friday, 6 September 2024

Exhibitors and attendees comment on late opening

Quiet third day at Asia Fruit Logistica

Super Typhoon Yagi brought strong winds and heavy rains to Hong Kong. The No. 8 signal – a high-level warning- remained in force during the morning hours and was lowered to No. 3 at 12:40 pm local time today. This enabled services in the city to resume and Asia Fruit Logistica to open its doors. Instead of opening at 10:00 am, the show floor opened at 1:30 pm for visitors and opening hours have been extended with two hours until 7:00 pm local time tonight.

Last year, the event was also impacted by weather and doors remained closed on the third day of the event. Exhibitors and attendees were asked to comment on the fact that weather impacts the show again for the second year in a row. In general, many people are understanding as the situation was out of the organizer's control. In all the years this event has been held, it is only the second time it has been severely impacted by weather. However, the first time was just last year and as a result, not everyone shares that same level of compassion.

Empathy

"We empathize with the organizers that the show couldn't begin as normal at 10:00 am this morning," said Jill Witheyman with Angus Soft Fruit. "We are disappointed, but this unforeseen outcome was unavoidable. The show has been a great success so far with an engaging and positive atmosphere and we are pleased we can return for the afternoon," she said.

Many attendees learned a lesson last year and planned the majority of meetings during the first two days of the event. "We normally plan our meetings for the first two days only, so it is not a problem for us," commented Sam Manujith with The Avolution. As a result of the weather forecast, many Chinese companies were already planning for the show to be canceled on the third day and started rushing to make appointments on the second day instead.

"The afternoon of the last day entrance is free to the public," commented Mr. Tian from Jining Shangzhuo. "Therefore, most professional attendees visit our stand on the first and second day of the event. As a result, the weather conditions on the last day had little impact on our participation."



Moving the dates

However, not everyone is as sympathetic. "The weather in this part of the world is very unpredictable this time of year. July, August, and September are the worst typhoon months and with many attendees traveling a long distance to attend, the organizers should consider moving Asia Fruit Logistica to a different time of year," one exporter noted. In addition, some South American exhibitors were upset to again only have two days of the show. "Maybe the organizers should consider moving to other dates when these weather events are less common," one person commented.

"Although the organizers have extended the opening hours until 7:00 pm, it will definitely affect us," said Mr. Ma from Sichuan Xuewang Lemon. "We've heard from many friends that they've already left, and we lost half a day to meet new and existing customers."

"I'm so disappointed we had to cancel the morning session, and I can't see the afternoon re-opening will be successful," an exporter from South Africa said.

"I expected the closure but lost part of my meetings as many visitors decided to leave as they expected the event to be closed for the third day," commented Mahmoud Abozaid with BGP International. "In my humble opinion, I believe it would be better to move the exhibition to the second week of September. By that time, the risks of typhoons are significantly less, and the timing is still close to the original dates."

Would moving the dates be a viable solution? It will bring other complications as it may result in the event clashing with other trade shows in Asia or in other parts of the world.



Many exhibitors are not returning for the third day.

Quiet third day

When asked about the impact of the weather on the event, the show organizer also commented. "We haven't made any assessments yet and are now busy preparing for the afternoon. Yesterday, we opened an hour early and most attendees saw the notice on our website in time. We are expecting the same for today and believe exhibitors and visitors will still attend."

In reality, many booths appear to be empty today. There are less people, but the atmosphere is casual and relaxed. Country pavilions are doing their best to offer fruit tastings and host meetings. Some last-minute meetings are still being held. With the show floor being open to the public, locals are walking around to collect fruit and gifts.



Some meetings are still being held.

Publication date: Fri 6 Sep 2024

Author: [Marieke Hemmes](#)

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