

It will join with localities and businesses in removing trade barriers, expanding markets, promoting science and technology transfer, supporting farmers in accessing capital, building concentrated fruit growing areas, and developing deep processing facilities to diversify products and improve quality.

The focus would be on promoting official exports to China while expanding to other markets, including Japan, the US, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Russia, ASEAN, the EU, the Middle East and North Africa.

Statistics of the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Import-Export Department showed that Việt Nam's fruit export was estimated at \$2.45 billion in the first nine months of this year, representing a drop of 11 per cent over the same period last year due to the substantial reduction in the export to China. The department forecasted fruit export at \$3.2 billion this year, 10 per cent lower than in 2021.

Đặng Phúc Nguyên, General Secretary of the Việt Nam Fruit Association, said that China was the largest fruit consumption market of Vietnam so far, adding that the growth of fruit export depended mainly on this 1.4 billion population market.

As China imposed tightened measures to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic this year, Việt Nam's fruit export dropped despite the effort to expand to other markets, Nguyên said.

The Import-Export Department's statistics showed that Việt Nam's fruit export to China was around \$1 billion in January-September, decreasing by more than 30 per cent over the

same period last year.

China accounted for 57 per cent of Việt Nam's fruit exports in 2021 but only 44 per cent so far this year.

Thus, promoting official export to China played an important role in increasing fruit export. Vietnamese authorities were promoting negotiations with the Chinese side to open up the market for some Vietnamese agricultural products.

Most recently, China allowed the official import of durian from Việt Nam after nearly six years of negotiation. In addition, the General Department of Customs of China also agreed to pilot the import of passion fruit from Việt Nam from July 1.

Việt Nam's fresh pomelo was also officially allowed to enter the US, becoming the 7th fruit allowed to be imported into the US after mango, longan, lychee, dragon fruit, rambutan and star apple.

Besides the US market, 12 types of fruits of Việt Nam were allowed to enter demanding markets such as Japan and the EU.

According to Nguyên, Việt Nam should invest in post-harvest technology and develop the logistics system for fruits to ensure the quality of fresh fruits when exported to far markets such as the US and Europe.

Statistics of the General Department of Customs showed that dragon fruit was the fruit with the largest export revenue of Việt Nam, worth \$463 million in the first eight months of this year, followed by banana with \$237 million and durian with \$158 M.