

Taiwan: China's resumption of Taiwan pomelo imports politically motivated: Scholars

Sunday 8 September 2024, by [HUANG Frances](#), [YI-SHUAN Hsieh](#) (Date first published: 2 September 2024).

Taipei, Sept. 2 (CNA) Taiwanese scholars on Monday characterized China's decision to immediately resume imports of pomelos from Taiwan as politically motivated.

Yang Ming-hsien (楊明憲), a professor in the Department of International Business at Feng Chia University, noted that Chinese officials had emphasized opposing Taiwanese independence when announcing the lifting of the ban.

According to China's state-run Xinhua News Agency, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) has decided to resume imports of pomelos from Taiwan starting Monday.

Despite Beijing previously citing biosecurity and public health concerns, the imposition and lifting of import restrictions on Taiwanese pomelos have tended to align with political events.

China's ban on pomelo imports from Taiwan was imposed on Aug. 3, 2022, just hours after United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi landed in Taipei for a brief visit.

On April 28 this year, GAC Deputy Director Zhao Zenglian (趙增廉) said China would lift its ban on importing Wendan pomelo and several other agricultural and fishery products from Taiwan following "scientific assessments."

Zhao made the announcement during his meeting with a visiting delegation of Taiwan's opposition Kuomintang (KMT) lawmakers led by the party's caucus whip Fu Kun-chi (傅昆城), who was the magistrate of Hualien County in eastern Taiwan from 2009 to 2018.

Chen Binhua (陳斌華), a spokesperson for Beijing's State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, told Xinhua on Monday that the decision to resume pomelo imports came after Hualien County had submitted the relevant documents and improved biosecurity measures.

However, Chen also referenced the desire of KMT figures in Hualien County to resume exports as well as firmly opposing Taiwanese independence.

This emphasis on cross-strait issues rather than measurable biosecurity markers indicates that the lifting of the pomelo ban is likely politically motivated, Yang said.

Yang cautioned that China could again restrict exports of the fruit, saying Taiwanese farmers should continue to diversify their markets.

Echoing Yang, Chang Hung-yuan (張 Hung-yuan), an associate professor with the Department of International Trade of Chihlee University of Technology, said the resumption of pomelo exports from Taiwan was

announced ahead of the Mid-Autumn Festival to assuage pressure from Taiwanese pomelo farmers by raising purchases of the fruit during the peak season.

Chang said the move aims to facilitate unification through economic factors.

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Pomelo is traditionally consumed during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which falls on Sept. 17 this year.

Taiwan's exports of pomelos totaled 7,062 metric tons in 2021, with 4,821 metric tons shipped to China, according to government statistics.

After China imposed the ban on Taiwan citrus fruit, however, Taiwan's total pomelo exports dropped to 2,909 metric tons in 2022, with Hong Kong importing 2,623 metric tons, the data shows.

Last year, Taiwan's pomelo exports totaled approximately 2,709 metric tons, with Hong Kong again being the largest importer, buying 1,823 metric tons, according to the data.

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