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The Fruit and Vegetables Global Value Chain: Economic Upgrading and Workforce Development

(Gwynne, 1999). Today the sector employs around 450,000 people in production, packing, and processing, equivalent to 5% of the country's total labor force (CORFO, 2010; Lopez, 2010).⁹

In 1999, the first organization specifically focused on developing training programs for the sector, AGROCAP, was created with sponsorship from the Association for Fruit Exporters (ASDEX). This organization acts as an intermediary between producers, private training institutions, and the state employment and training agency, Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo (SENCE). Specifically, AGROCAP ensures that training meets the industry's human capital needs in addition to disseminating good workforce development practices (Vargas, 2010). By 2010, the organization had facilitated training for over 100,000 workers. In addition, at the end of the 1990s, the National Labor Skills Certification System (NLSCS) (see Box 2, Section VII) was established as a joint initiative between the Ministries of Economy, Education, Labor and Social Security, and Horticulture and was included as one of 15 key industries in the country.

Skills and competencies for every job in the sector were profiled and compiled with the help of the private sector. These results were shared with technical training institutions to ensure that educational programs met industry needs. In addition, practical examinations were made available for workers already in the industry to certify their competencies regardless of how these were acquired. More than 9,000 workers in the fruit and vegetable sector have been certified to date. Through its economic development agency, Corporación de Fomento de la Producción (CORFO), the government made financing available for training to facilitate the adoption of private quality standards (ASDEX, 2007).¹⁰

Stage 2: Packing and cold storage: 1985–Present

By the mid-1980s, producers and exporters in Chile were looking for new opportunities to maximize their success in the cultivation of fresh fruit products. Several firms developed creative and effective solutions to pack fresh fruit shipped to the United States and also in Europe, while buyers in these markets were beginning to look for improved presentation and packaging. By this time, "Plan Frutas," launched by CORFO in the late 1970s to study the behavior of different fruits in the cold chain, was beginning to yield results; the first packing and cold storage units were established throughout Chile (Pineda, 2008). Economic infrastructure improvements were made to highways and ports during the 1990s, reducing transportation times. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) streamlined SPS processes and protocols for packhouses with the establishment of two key certifications. In 1982, the Servicio de Agricultura y Ganadería (SAG), under the MAG, collaborated with ASDEX and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to develop a specific protocol (SAG/USDA) for

⁹ 100,000 permanent workers and 300,000 temporary workers.
¹⁰ AGROCAP, Nature's Choice; Theopropex standards; ISO 9001 and HACCP among others.

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