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WISCONSIN LEADS THE NATION AND WORLD IN CRANBERRY PRODUCTION FOR 22ND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

U.S. cranberry industry's investment in marketing efforts begins to pay off; industry reports positive shift in recent market imbalance

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. – This fall, Wisconsin's cranberry industry is once again projected to produce more cranberries than any other state, with an estimated crop of approximately 5.2 million barrels of fruit, according to projections announced today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistical Services (NASS). Wisconsin's bountiful projection is part of the approximately 8.6 million barrels of cranberries expected nationwide this year.

"Our growers work extremely hard and we are very proud of our role as the world's leading producer of cranberries. We are pleased that Wisconsin will continue its significant contribution to this industry," said Tom Lochner, executive director of the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association (WSCGA). "We are also encouraged by signs that the oversupply issue we have faced during the past few years is beginning to turn around, thanks to the industry's aggressive marketing efforts and support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

Several factors in recent years resulted in the market imbalance, including good growing conditions; new U.S., Canadian and Chilean cranberry acreage; and a flat demand in juice. To combat this issue, the industry began to focus heavily on growing interest and demand from international markets, and signs report that the investment is starting to pay off.

According to the U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee's (CMC) latest report, awareness and demand around the world is increasing. Overall 2015/16 exports of U.S. cranberries increased 7 percent, and exports to CMC's target markets increased 16 percent over the previous marketing year. China represented the largest increase by percentage, with exports growing 55 percent. Other strong international markets that CMC targets include Germany, Poland, Hungary and Mexico.

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Thanks to these aggressive marketing efforts, trends show that the market is beginning to even out. CMC projects a 5 percent increase in processed fruit sales and a 1.5 percent increase in fresh fruit sales this year. Additionally, CMC reports that inventory as a percentage of sales is trending downward, at 81 percent this year compared to 82 percent in 2015, and carry-in supply is growing at a much slower rate than in recent years. Domestic sales are also projected to be up 5 percent this year.

“All of these trends represent promising signs that the market is beginning to shift,” said Lochner. “There is still significant work to be done, and we are committed to continuing to do our part to stabilize the market and help the industry prosper.”

In addition to the industry’s marketing efforts, during the past two years the U.S. Department of Agriculture has purchased cranberries to incorporate into its food pantry and school lunch programs.

“The USDA support has been a win-win, because it allows students and those in need to receive all the health and nutrition benefits of cranberries while helping decrease existing inventory,” said Lochner.

The Wisconsin cranberry industry is a nearly \$1 billion industry that provides more than 4,000 jobs in the state. In 2015, Wisconsin growers had a crop of approximately 4.8 million barrels. This year’s projections are dependent on good growing weather for the remainder of the season, including no damaging hail storms or major temperature drops leading up to the fall harvest.

Wisconsin will begin harvesting its cranberry crop in late September and continue through much of October. Approximately 5 percent of the total cranberry crop will be sold as fresh fruit and the remaining cranberries will be frozen and stored for longer-term sales as frozen berries, dried cranberries, juices, sauces and more.

NASS, which bases its crop estimates on grower surveys nationwide, also made crop projections for other top cranberry producing states. Those projections are: Massachusetts at approximately 2.07 million barrels, New Jersey at 588,000 barrels, Oregon at 530,000 barrels and Washington at 194,000 barrels.

WSCGA was founded in 1887 and is committed to developing and implementing programs that will assist growers in doing a better job of growing cranberries and strengthening the public support for the industry in Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.wiscran.org, Like WSCGA on [Facebook](#) and Follow on [Twitter](#).

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