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WISCONSIN CRANBERRY GROWERS CONTINUE TO LEAD NATION IN POTENTIALLY RECORD-BREAKING HARVEST

Industry votes to recommend supply constraints for two years; Growers encourage consumers to enjoy cranberries year-round

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. – According to projections released today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Statistical Services (NASS), Wisconsin is expected to continue to lead the nation in cranberry production this fall, harvesting an estimated 5.6 million barrels of fruit. This harvest projection is part of the approximately 9 million barrels of cranberries expected nationwide, adding to a surplus facing the industry for the past several years. With such strong projections on the horizon, the industry is looking at ways to control the fast-growing inventory, working to increase demand, and urging consumers to incorporate cranberries into their meals throughout the year.

“Wisconsin is a leader in cranberry growing and we are proud of our hardworking growers and their many contributions. The Wisconsin cranberry industry is a major economic driver that supplies thousands of jobs and brings in a total value of nearly \$1 billion each year,” said Tom Lochner, executive director of the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association (WSCGA). “At the same time, the oversupply is a challenge for our growers. With the commodity price for cranberries well below the cost of production, many growers in Wisconsin and across the country are experiencing low returns and financial difficulties.”

Several factors have caused the market imbalance, including strong growing conditions, new cranberry acreage, technological advances and a flat demand in certain products, like cranberry juice. Last week at the U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee’s annual meeting, the industry unanimously approved a motion to set volume regulations on the 2017 and 2018 crops, including an 85 percent handler withholding on the 2017 crop and a 75 percent producer allotment on the 2018 crop. This recommendation will next go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for consideration.

“This motion is intended to help stabilize marketing conditions and improve grower returns,” said Lochner. “This short-term solution will help slow the excess supply being built while the industry continues to focus its efforts on the long-term solution of increasing demand both domestically and in international markets.”

The U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC) has worked diligently to increase demand overseas, especially in target countries like China, India, Mexico, South Korea and the European Union. In collaboration with CMC, Wisconsin cranberry growers will host a Reverse Trade Mission for representatives and media from India and China this fall.

“Growing demand internationally is a big opportunity, and the industry is working hard to market cranberries to new audiences,” said Tom Lochner. “At the same time, domestic consumers are still the largest purchasers of cranberries. We hope that Wisconsinites will show their cranberry pride and help move the needle by finding more ways to incorporate cranberries into their meals year-round.”

Twenty percent of cranberries are consumed during the holiday season, and many consumers don't realize that the nutrition-packed fruit can easily be enjoyed year round. Lochner recommends adding a splash of cranberry juice to teas or lemonades, or incorporating dried cranberries into a favorite salad or side dish. Consumers can find recipe ideas and more at www.wiscran.org.

In 2016, Wisconsin growers had a crop of approximately 6 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 five 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 2.2 million barrels, New Jersey at 590,000 barrels, Oregon at 480,000 barrels and Washington at 180,000 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 us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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