



## Canada's

### Agriculture, Food and Beverage INDUSTRY

## Canada's Fruit Industry

Canada is a world leader in producing, storing and processing fruits in innovative and environmentally responsible ways. Consumer awareness of the health benefits of making fruits a part of their daily diets has contributed to an increase in consumption in recent years.

A number of fruits are native to Canada, including cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, black raspberries, saskatoons and the labrusca grape.

The Canadian fruit industry has adapted to Canada's northern climate and short growing season. It has become a world leader in improving farm management and storage techniques. Canadian apples, for example, can be supplied virtually year-round using controlled atmosphere storage.

A wide-range of fruits are grown commercially in Canada, including apples, tender fruits (peaches, pears, plums, prunes and cherries), grapes, blueberries, cranberries, strawberries and raspberries. Apples are Canada's largest fruit crop in terms of tonnage; however, due to declining apple prices over the last few years and the growth of the blueberry industry, blueberries are now the most valuable crop.

Canada is the world's largest producer of wild ("low-bush") blueberries, with 42,293 tonnes produced in 2007, worth over \$89 million at the farm gate. Canada also produced a record 35,110 tonnes of cultivated ("high-bush") blueberries worth almost \$100 million at the farm gate in 2007.

An estimated 405,000 tonnes of apples valued at \$164 million (farm gate price) were produced in 2007. About two thirds of Canada's apples were shipped fresh, while the rest went to processing markets for a variety of uses ranging from pressing for juices and ciders to peeling and slicing for

the canning and baking industries.

The Canadian cranberry industry has also grown considerably in recent years. In 2007, cranberry production, which reached 67,361 tonnes worth an estimated \$69 million at the farm gate, was responsible for over 10% of the total Canadian fruit sector farm gate value.



In 2007, Canadian fruit exports reached \$441 million and the top export markets were the United States, Japan and the European Union.

In 2007, Canada's main fruit exports were:

- 68,137 tonnes of fresh and frozen blueberries, worth almost \$324 million;
- 45,316 tonnes of cranberries, worth over \$44 million; and
- 38,811 tonnes of fresh apples, worth almost \$36 million.

Southern Ontario and southwest British Columbia have the longest growing seasons, with about 180 frost-free days per year. Regions of Quebec and the Maritimes also have significant fruit production despite having only about 120 frost-free days.

BC, Ontario and Quebec produce the majority of fruit in Canada. In 2007, fruit from these provinces accounted for 88% of



total fruit farm cash receipts. Ontario is the largest apple and grape producer, while BC produces the most blueberries, raspberries and cranberries.

### **Safety, Research and Innovation**

Most Canadian fresh fruit is handpicked to reduce bruising; however, innovative new techniques allow some fruits to be harvested mechanically, reducing spoilage and increasing harvest pace.

Canadian scientists continually develop and enhance technology in areas such as plant breeding to maximize production. In the last decade, a number of new fruit varieties and production techniques have been adapted to the Canadian climate. New varieties of grapes, peaches, cherries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, kiwis, blackberries, currants and gooseberries have also been developed through breeding programs.



The berry sector is encouraged by continuing research showing several health related benefits, particularly antioxidant activities common to the Vaccinium family of crops. Berries contain anthocyanins, a natural antioxidant claimed to be beneficial in fighting aging, heart disease and cancer.

Pesticide use in Canada is significantly lower than in many countries, due in part to a cooler climate. In response to consumer demand for reduced pesticide use, scientists are working to find alternative and natural ways to control pests and diseases. More producers are using integrated pest management (IPM) programs, where pest populations are closely monitored and

pesticides are precisely applied to maximize effectiveness and minimize usage.

With international requirements becoming more devoted to on-farm food safety, fruit growers are developing integrated fruit production (IFP) guidelines for their production. IFP was developed in conjunction with other international guidelines such as EUREPGAP in Europe. IFP is defined as the economical production of high quality fruit which gives priority to ecologically sound methods and minimizes the use of agricultural chemicals, thereby protecting the environment and human health.

### **For More Detailed Information**

#### **Farid Makki**

Senior Market Development Advisor  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
1341 Baseline Road, Tower 5  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5  
Canada  
Tel: (613) 773-0262  
Fax: (613) 773-0299  
Email: [makkif@agr.gc.ca](mailto:makkif@agr.gc.ca)  
Web site: [www.agr.gc.ca/misb/hort](http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/hort)

**Further information on products, suppliers and investment opportunities in the Canadian agri-food industry is available on the Agri-Food Trade Service Web site at: [www.ats.agr.gc.ca](http://www.ats.agr.gc.ca)**

Canada's food and agricultural products reflect our dedication to excellence, and our deep commitment to safety, quality, environmental responsibility, innovation and service.

In every facet of our industry, we seek to earn the trust of our customers by answering their needs and exceeding their expectations. Those values along with our belief in building strong relationships, have given Canadian agriculture and food products an international reputation for excellence. Customers around the world know that they can trust the goodness of Canada.

