

## Peru: 54% growth in blueberry exports predicted

By the end of 2017, Peruvian exports of fresh blueberries would reach 40,000 tons, which would represent a 54% growth over the 26 thousand tons registered the previous year.

This was pointed out by Sergio del Castillo Valderrama, general manager of the Association of Blueberries Producers of Peru (ProArándanos), who pointed out that this increase is due to the fact that some plants have just entered production, while others have arrived at the stage of maturity that produces higher yields.

He added that there is also better agronomic management by growers, who know more about flowering. "There is a whole learning curve that allows greater volumes to be obtained".

### China in full swing

Sergio del Castillo estimated that at the end of this year the main markets for Peruvian blueberry would be the United States, which would represent 46% of the total, Europe with 20%, Asia with 17%, United Kingdom with 15%, and others with 2%.

He pointed out that of the 6,800 tons of blueberries that would be sent to Asia (17% of the total that Peru would export), 90% would go to China (6,120 tons), a market that received blueberries from Peru for the first time this year.

"China (China + Hong Kong) in its first year as a market destination would exceed the United Kingdom and is close to displacing Europe. China will become the second main destination for Peruvian blueberries after the United States," he said.

He added that this estimate could occur next year, but will depend on how shipments are projected. "If China offers a higher price for Peruvian blueberry, a lot of volume will go to that country, although I do not think exporters will stop serving the United States and Europe, so importers will have to pay more for our fruit," he said.

### Peru will have 5 thousand hectares of blueberries in 2018

At another time, Sergio del Castillo pointed out that Peru currently has around 4,500 hectares of blueberries (3,500 hectares belong to the associates of ProArndanos and 1,000 hectares to other producers).

He said that this year no less than 500 hectares of blueberries were installed, so he predicted that next year they "will surely reach 5,000 hectares and I think this will continue to grow, but that will depend on how the markets behave."

In addition he said that the sowing of more varieties of the fruit has begun, nevertheless "Biloxi" continues dominating the market. "Of the 3,500 hectares of blueberries that ProArndanos associates have, 2,500 are Biloxi, and I believe that this variety will continue to be planted as it has good qualities and is sought after abroad - it has a good bloom and great consistency, which is why it travels well and has long shelf life."

Peru is now the second largest producer and exporter of blueberries in South America, after Chile.

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