

# Demand for blueberries and raspberries has tripled

Berries are trendy, especially blueberries and raspberries. The small blue and red fruits are now very much consumers' favourites. As a result, demand for both blueberries and raspberries has more than tripled since 2010 (from 3,000 tonnes to 9,500 tonnes). However, the economic protection regulations for these two products are clearly different.

## Blueberries overtake raspberries

Since 2010, the consumption of blueberries has almost quintupled from around 1,000 tonnes to just under 5,000 tonnes (+ 480%). Demand for raspberries more than doubled over the same period, from around 2,000 tonnes to more than 4,500 tonnes (+ 231%). In 2016, for the first time more blueberries than raspberries were consumed.

There are also similar trends in price developments. Consumer prices have been on a downward trend since 2011 for both types of berries. If a consumer price of CHF 26.90 per kilo was paid for blueberries in 2011, the average price in 2016 was still around CHF 21.50 per kilo (-20%). With raspberries a similar development can be observed during the same period. For example, the average consumer price of raspberries has fallen from CHF 25.90 to 21.60 per kilogram, which corresponds to a decrease of 16.5%. Overall, the average import price has been fairly stable since 2011: for blueberries it has been between CHF 10.20 and 11.40 per kilo, for raspberries between CHF 11.90 and 13.40 per kilo.

## Blueberries without economic protection

Although the two berries have seen similar developments in the near past, there have been equally marked differences between the two products, especially in the economic protection regime. In contrast to raspberries, blueberries have no economic protection. This means that blueberries can go duty-free to Switzerland at any time while raspberries on the other hand have a tariff quota with a low quota duty rate and a high non-quota customs charge (ABC). The outside quota approach then applies when the harvest is in Switzerland. This difference is very clear in the volume development of both fruits. Raspberries show two distinct peaks each year (the bright red or dark red area in the accompanying graph). In the case of blueberries, the small amount of dark blue Swiss crops is enclosed in the light blue import quantity, which means that blueberries are continually being imported (left-

hand side of the graph). Accordingly, more imported than domestic blueberries are offered throughout the year as a whole.

### **Domestic shares decrease**

The difference in the economic protection regimes is a historical one. Although blueberry consumption and cultivation was marginal until well into the 2000s, in Switzerland raspberries have had a certain tradition of cultivation and consumption, which explains today's protection regime. With the advent of blueberries, the federal government supported the cultivation of blueberries until 2011 by promoting 'innovative cultures'. On the tariff side, however, nothing was changed. Overall, this led to a significant increase in acreage, and domestic production increased to 458 tonnes by 2014. Two low harvests in the last two years (despite further increase in acreage) and the continuing demand boom for blueberries have led to a fall in the market share of domestic production from 14% in 2014 to 6.5%.

For raspberries, the domestic share has also decreased. While the domestic share was still above 60% in 2006, it fell to 34% in 2016. In particular, the amount of raspberries imported into the AKZA has increased significantly in recent years.

Due to consumer behaviour, it can be assumed that this trend will continue in the years to come, with blueberries also expected to slow down in the medium term.

[ 1 Swiss franc = 0.85 Euros ].

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