



Aiming to emulate blueberry success, Peru is set for a raspberry boom

Peru is aiming to become a major player in the fresh raspberry export industry, with a large number of plantings going in the ground.

The Peruvian Exporters' Association (ADEX) says that raspberries will likely be the country's next agricultural boom and could emulate the success enjoyed by blueberries, which have seen explosive growth since the fruit was introduced just a few years ago.

Peru has a long harvesting period for the fruit, and believes it can fill a market niche, especially with a 10% expected decline in global raspberry production this year to 540,000 metric tons (MT).

Alfonso Velásquez, spokesman and former president of the Association of Exporters (ADEX), explained that raspberries are a new crop in Peru.

Growers are currently working with the Heritage variety, which was brought in from Chile and has shown good results in the Peruvian mountainous region.

"It has adapted well, with the permanent support of Chilean technicians," Velásquez told Fresh Fruit Portal.

The first harvests were made eight months after planting, with yields of around 6,000-7,000 kilograms per hectare.

Velásquez said the variety could be produced throughout most of the year, allowing the country to supply a variety of markets when there is high demand.

Although there are only around 100 hectares planted at present, he expects that by the end of 2019 there will be more than 500 hectares in commercial production.

Initially, growers will be focused on the domestic market and will then begin exporting.

"I believe that at the beginning of 2020 we will be exporting – January or February," he said.

Peru will probably start off exporting to Brazil, Colombia and Central America. However, its sights are on the U.S. market, and authorities are working hard on phytosanitary export agreements.



Velásquez said that the country has learnt a lot from growing and exporting blueberries and will apply much of that information to raspberries.

“I think our niche, our opportunity is in the fresh market and this means taking advantage of the logistics that the blueberry has,” he said.

“We are working on transportation methods, we are talking about bags in a controlled atmosphere, ... all conditions are being provided to ensure that raspberries also have a great opportunity.”

He explained Peru does not plan to compete with Chile. Peru’s South American neighbor has close to 9,000 hectares, a figure which is in decline, but exports mainly frozen raspberries.

Opportunities for small-holder farmers

ADEX highlighted that one of its goals is for raspberries to be an economic opportunity not just for companies for also small-holder farmers.

“Repeatedly, growing traditional crops we have had problems of overproduction. Traditional products in the Peruvian mountainous regions keep farmers poor and sometimes make them even poorer. We have to give them alternatives”, he said.

“Here the message is to reconvert small Peruvian farms to raspberry.”

He emphasized that, for now, the important thing is to generate interest.

“In 2011 when we started promoting blueberries, we never expected that in six years we could exceed US\$300 million,” he said.

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