

Organic blueberry exports from Chile are peaking

According to the latest Crop Report of Chile's Blueberry Committee-ASOEX, the organic blueberry's peak export season began with 1,047 tons exported in week 2 of 2019. This is due to the increase in volume of the southern area, mainly from the region of Araucanía and Los Rios.

To date, the Chilean industry has exported 5,456 tons of organic blueberries, i.e. 49% more than in the same week of the 2017-2018 campaign.

The main destination for the country's organic blueberry continues to be North America with 73% of the accumulated volumes. It is followed by Europe with a 25% participation.

General shipments of Chilean blueberries

According to the Crop Report, the country exported 9,002 tons of blueberries in week 02, despite the rains and the interruption of the harvest. This week (03), temperatures have increased and producers expect they'll go up to nearly 30°C from the south central zone to the south of the country. As a result, they expect there will be an increase in the harvest rate.

Up to week 02, Chile had exported 66,302 tons of blueberries to their different destination markets. This figure is 6% higher than in the same period of the previous year.

In terms of destinations, shipments to Europe remain firm, with 3,064 tons shipped during that week, while shipments to North America amounted to 4,873 tons, and shipments to the Far East 1,050 tons.

Upward trend in the consumption of organic products in the US and Europe

Since the United States is the main market for Chilean blueberries, it is important to note that Nielsen recently delivered the results of an analysis of organic product consumption in US supermarkets. The report states that there has been a growth in sales of this type products, which exceeds the growth reflected by their conventional counterparts.

Organic products, according to Nielsen vice president Brian Lechner, account for 14 percent of all dollar sales within food products department. Lechner added that the growth in the organic product category is surpassing the growth of conventional products by a factor



of five to seven times. "Organic products continue to have a very strong trend compared to conventional products," he said.

The Nielsen representative added that, even though sales of organic products have increased, they still don't lead the product department's sales. An exception can be found in the baby food area, where the organic category now accounts for more than a quarter of all sales in this area.

Nielsen's VP, said that the organic products with the greatest growth within the US retail were cranberries, apples, bananas, mushrooms, and packaged salads; most of which were also part of the top 10 volumes of almost any retailer, so earnings represent significant growth in dollars.

Nielsen's data shows that organic products with premium prices vary widely from one item to another. Research shows that 'conscious mothers' are not sensitive to prices and are willing to pay whatever is necessary to buy the foods they consider healthier for their children. Millennials are also not particularly sensitive to prices. In this regard, Lechener, said that the ageing of millennials, who now are married and have children, will keep sales of organic products on the rise. "The wave continues to grow," he said.

In Europe (EU-28), organic consumption also grows, but the increase differs from one country to another. According to a report by IFOAM EU, the area devoted to organic plantations has increased significantly between 1985 and 2016, reaching 12.1 million hectares. The amount of organic producers has also increased and now totals 295,123, as well as the number of organic processors, which amount to 62,652, and, of course, the organic food market, which has increased to € 30.7 billion in retail sales.

Sales in the European retail sector grow at annual rates of 12%. While per capita consumption of this type of products stands at € 60.5.

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