Exporting Washington Blueberries

Alan Schreiber
Washington Blueberry Commission
Eltopia, Washington

Can we export our way out of the situation we are in?
Washington and most other blueberry growing regions in the Western Hemisphere is increasing production placing stress supply versus demand.

Blueberries is now the place where apples, cherries, pears, hops, and many other commodities were/are; one way an industry can deal with this situation is to “export your way out of this situation”.
The Washington Blueberry Commission believes that developing export markets is essential to the health of the Washington blueberry market.

- I feel like British Columbia, California and Oregon have aggressively adopted export market development more/earlier than Washington.
- Bear in mind that B.C. budget is more than double ours.
- Oregon has a bigger budget than ours and for a longer time.
- California spends money on export market development like we spend on research.
- Bryan Sakuma, WBC Chair, has told me to spend more time, money and effort on developing export markets.
- So……..here we go……..
I think the Commission’s Goal should be...

Washington should export a higher percentage of our crop than any other state. Why not? We have the ingredients to do this.
Our strategies to increase exports.

- Addressing maximum residue levels (MRLs).
- Exploring and learning about new emerging markets.
- Trying to open up markets to Washington fresh and processed blueberry markets.
- Providing sales opportunities to Washington exporters.
WBC Export Market Development Efforts

1. Washington comments on any proposed new MRL or proposed changes to an MRL anywhere in the world. (WRRC and the OBC are right there with us.)

2. The WBC funded a project to work with pesticide companies and foreign governments to change MRLs that are obstacles to export of Washington blueberries.

3. WBC funded a 3 year project that show growers how to use blueberry insecticides in a way to not violate MRLs in key export markets.

4. The WBC has funded the first year of a project to show growers how to use blueberry fungicides in a way to not violate MRLs in key export markets.
According to these data, you could probably export to any major export market even through the U.S. MRL is 13 ppm, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan = 10, Canada = 6.
The WBC received a Specialty Crop Block Grant to have a contractor write reports on market opportunities and challenges for China, Korea and India.

These reports are available to anyone interested in them.
In cooperation with California, we hired an international trade firm to open up foreign markets for Washington blueberries.

- China
- South Korea
- India
- Vietnam
- Philippines
- Australia
- New Zealand
- South Africa
Hired foreign trade representatives

- China
- South Korea

Was going to go in to India, but....

I think we need to send someone to China and to South Korea to meet up with our trade representatives.

Needs to be the right person.

Not sure but may be looking for volunteers.
Trade Missions

- Have gone to China three times.
- Have gone to South Korea twice.
- Have gone to India once.
- Considering trade mission to Vietnam and Philippines.
- Considering hosting foreign trade missions coming into this country. Great idea, just costs money.
Switch to other documents