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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Tom Lochner – (715) 423-2070 / (715) 459-2343

WISCONSIN EXPECTING TO HARVEST 4.35 MILLION BARRELS OF CRANBERRIES THIS FALL

Warm and wet weather, bigger berries contribute to projected bountiful crop

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. – The [Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association](#) (WSCGA) today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS) projects that Wisconsin will yield 4.35 million barrels of cranberries during the 2010 fall harvest – an increase of 10 percent over 2009. Based on the projections – and with cooperation from Mother Nature during the next four to six weeks – Wisconsin will be the country’s top cranberry-producing state for the 16th consecutive year.

Tom Lochner, executive director of WSCGA, said the projected crop is due to a warm and wet growing season. The crop also shows the growers’ increased commitment to growing the cranberries in a sustainable way.

“Wisconsin growers are looking forward to another bountiful crop this year,” said Lochner. “It’s been a good summer for all things green and growing, and it’s a positive sign that the state’s largest fruit crop continues to grow and flourish.”

NASS, which bases its crop estimates on grower surveys, also made crop projections for other top cranberry producing states. Those projections are: Massachusetts at 1.95 million barrels, New Jersey at 530,000 barrels, Oregon at 385,000 barrels and Washington at 135,000 barrels.

According to Lochner, the warm summer and the significant rainfalls in the state contributed to this year’s good crop in Wisconsin. Because of that, Lochner says the growers haven’t needed to irrigate as much on the marshes as much this summer for crop needs or frost, which also contributes to the [sustainability practices](#) many growers have in place. For instance, many growers have water conservation systems that measure tension and pressure in the soil so they know how much or how little to irrigate their cranberry beds.

Lochner also added that growers are already noticing berries are larger in size this time of year than in recent seasons.

“While size doesn’t affect the taste of the tart cranberries, it is a positive sign of a good crop,” he said. “We still have six weeks to go until harvest begins, so it will be interesting to see how much bigger the cranberries will get in that time. The quality of the 2010 crop should be exceptional.”

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The 2010 crop is also expected to produce an over-supply of cranberries. In 2008, the Wisconsin cranberry industry announced efforts to increase production of cranberries to help meet rising domestic and international demand, as well as bring more jobs and economic activity to Wisconsin. In the first year of that expansion effort, approximately 1,500 acres of new marshes were planted. Higher yields, that new acreage in Wisconsin as well as Canada and the overall slowed economy have contributed to this over-supply and building inventories.

“Due to the current economy, both the national and international demand is down,” said Lochner. “We want to step up our marketing efforts to demonstrate the quality and health of Wisconsin cranberries and get the demand going again.”

Right now, Wisconsin’s cranberry industry currently has an annual economic impact of \$350 million and supports 7,200 jobs from its 18,000 acres of cranberries grown in 19 counties in central and northern Wisconsin.

The [U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee](#) (CMC), part of the USDA, has marketed cranberries in other countries since 1999 and reports that cranberry industry exports overall have increased by 1.7 percent over the last year in what it classifies as a tough global economy. The international markets the CMC specifically targets, including Germany, France, South Korea, Australia and others, are seeing an increase in cranberry exports of 24 percent over the last year. In the coming year the CMC is looking at potential new international markets to target, including countries in the Middle East, Turkey and India to help offset the over-supply.

“There are so many factors that contribute to the increased demand of cranberries, including research that demonstrates the cranberry’s health benefits and disease fighting and prevention abilities, and creativity by manufacturers to introduce cranberries and sweetened dried cranberries into a variety of products,” said Lochner. “It’s all in the name of growing the industry on a statewide, nationwide and worldwide scale.”

Wisconsin’s annual cranberry harvest will begin in late September or early October. Cranberries have been harvested in Wisconsin since the 1830s, even before Wisconsin was a state.

WSCGA was founded in 1887 and is committed to developing and implementing programs that will assist growers in doing a better job of growing cranberries and strengthen the public support for the industry in Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.wiscran.org. WSCGA is also on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Also, for more information on the domestic and international marketing of cranberries visit, www.uscranberries.com and health and research information on cranberries is available at www.cranberryinstitute.org.

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