



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**WISCONSIN PROJECTED TO HAVE STRONG CRANBERRY HARVEST; STATE EXPECTED TO
BE NATIONAL CRANBERRY CROP LEADER AGAIN**

**WISCONSIN CRANBERRY INDUSTRY TO HOST
GLOBAL EXPORT REPRESENTATIVES IN SEPTEMBER**

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 4.0 million barrels of cranberries during the 2009 fall harvest. Based on that projection and with cooperation from Mother Nature during the next four to six weeks, this year's crop will be Wisconsin's second largest cranberry crop ever, and Wisconsin will be the top cranberry-producing state for the 15th consecutive year. The NASS estimate is based upon surveys of growers across the country.

“Wisconsin growers are pleased with the outlook for this year's harvest,” said Tom Lochner, executive director of WSCGA. “This is good news for a leading Wisconsin industry that continues to grow.”

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service also made crop projections for other top cranberry producing states. Those projections are: Massachusetts at 1.9 million barrels, New Jersey at 540,000 barrels, Oregon at 490,000 barrels and Washington at 155,000 barrels. Cranberries are also being increasingly grown in Canada and Chile.

Nationwide, the 2009 cranberry crop is projected to be down 10 percent from the 2008 crop. Based on NASS' projection and its 4.47 million barrel estimate of the Wisconsin 2008 crop, Wisconsin production will decrease 11 percent. The U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC) records actual crop deliveries, and it recorded the 2008 Wisconsin crop as a record-breaking 4.3 million barrels. Using that figure, the 2009 crop is a 7 percent decrease from 2008. The CMC will issue its 2009 crop projection later this week.

According to Lochner, the late arrival of Wisconsin's spring season and the cooler-than-normal July did not significantly impact the 2009 cranberry crop. He added that vines emerged from winter in good shape, the August heat will likely help fruit grow in size, and, even though it has been dry, especially in the northern cranberry growing areas of the state, it has not impacted the crop. In mid-August, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle declared a drought emergency for 41 Wisconsin counties.

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“Our crop – just like others around Wisconsin – depends on Mother Nature,” Lochner said.

“We’ve been fortunate to have weather conditions that help cranberry growth, and with the ability to irrigate our crop, we’ve been able to manage through drought conditions.”

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. In 2008, the industry announced efforts to increase production of cranberries in the state to help meet demand and bring more jobs and economic activity to Wisconsin. In the first year of that expansion effort, approximately 1,500 acres of new marshes have been planted or are being planted. Those new marshes will bear fruit in three to five years.

According to the CMC, the growing demand for cranberries is attributed to several efforts, including an aggressive international marketing campaign that began in 1999. The CMC reports that cranberry industry exports increased by more than 14 percent over the last year, and that on average, over the last several years, approximately 25 percent of the national crop has been exported. Other factors contributing to the increased demand include 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.

According to Lochner, to assist in efforts to increase the use of cranberries on a global scale, marketing representatives from 12 countries will visit Wisconsin cranberry marshes in late September in an effort to learn more about cranberries and promote them in their respective countries.

“That visit will be a chance for international representatives to see cranberry marshes up close and personal, and really get a sense for how the fruit can be used and marketed in their own countries,” said Lochner. “There is unlimited potential in the world cranberry market, and Wisconsin cranberry growers want to help grow the industry.”

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. 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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EDITOR NOTES:

More information on the late September cranberry tours will be forwarded soon.

For high-resolution photos of the cranberry harvest, vines, berries, or cranberry products, please contact knaidl@zeppos.com or lolstad@zeppos.com or call 414-276-6237.