



Cranberry Industry Working to Build Demand for its Growing Production MP3

Gary Crawford [00:00:00] By the time you hear this, you're either probably making cranberry sauce or eating it at the Thanksgiving table or breaking into the leftovers after Thanksgiving. Either way, it's cranberries' time to shine. We're out here at the Agriculture Department's farmers market in Washington, D.C. We're talking with Karen Cahill with the Cranberry Marketing Committee. Karen, you got a big job to do. You showed me some numbers about cranberry production in this country. It looks like every year our growers are figuring out ways to produce more cranberries almost every year. They turn out a record or near record crop. But that has got to be a challenge for folks like you who whose job it is to sell those barrels. Right?

Karen Cahill [00:00:38] The trends for production are growing. Demand is not growing quite at the rate that we would like it to be.

Gary Crawford [00:00:45] But you're working on it, right?

Karen Cahill [00:00:47] Heck yeah.

Gary Crawford [00:00:47] Heck yeah. We'll get to that in a second. Now, I understand that the cranberry industry, I don't know of any other ag industry that can do this. But your industry, through a 24-member committee of growers, you actually can impose on yourself mandatory cuts in production. And I understand things were so out of whack in 2017 and 18 growers did just that to try to keep prices stable. What about this year?

Karen Cahill [00:01:12] They voted to not pursue volume regulation. They're comfortable with where supply and demand are.

Gary Crawford [00:01:18] And where is that? What is the estimated size of this season's harvest, which is probably just wrapped up right about now?

Karen Cahill [00:01:26] Eight point nine million barrels. Not record breaking, but it's up there.

Gary Crawford [00:01:31] Barrels! You don't get many crops measured in barrels these days. What's a barrel in this case?

Karen Cahill [00:01:35] One barrel is 100 pounds of cranberries.

Gary Crawford [00:01:39] Oooh, so you got a lot, 890 million pounds. That's a lot of cranberries to find homes for and uses for. How is that going?

Karen Cahill [00:01:46] The consumption has leveled off here, which is fine. And we're working to keep it steady. But really, where we could see the most growth is in the export markets. We have a heavy push in China and India right now.

Gary Crawford [00:01:58] Oooh China, are U.S. cranberries caught up in this trade war?

Karen Cahill [00:02:02] There are tariffs on all of the different product forms, juice, concentrate, dried, have been hit. And so, the last year, year and a half, that's been difficult.

Gary Crawford [00:02:12] So I guess your industry, among others, anxiously watching the ups and downs, the arms and offs of this trade negotiation process, right?

Karen Cahill [00:02:21] We hope that the politics work out.

Gary Crawford [00:02:23] That would be a great way to start the holidays, wouldn't it?
Gary Crawford for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington.