



- Advertisement -

Berry category seeing an upswing in sales

By

Keith Loria

May 6, 2021

Strawberries are a year-round anchor of the berry category in U.S. supermarkets, representing nearly two-thirds of the sales volume and more than \$3 billion in annual sales.

A recent national survey revealed that one-third of U.S. consumers named strawberries as their favorite fruit. It's no wonder that purchase intent for strawberries is at an all-time high, with nine in 10 consumers indicating they definitely/probably would buy fresh strawberries, according to the California Strawberry Commission.

"California strawberry farmers are a dedicated and skilled group of people. Many come from generations of farmers, starting as strawberry pickers and working their way up to acquire land and grow their own crops," the commission noted. "All along the central and southern coast, hundreds of California strawberry farmers are cultivating the majority of all the U.S.-grown strawberries on less than 1 percent of the Golden State's farmland. In many cases, second- and third-generation farmers keep producing America's favorite fruit."

Approximately 90 percent of strawberries grown in the U.S. originate in California, with strawberry farms returning 97 cents of every farm dollar to their local communities.

The 2021 projected total for strawberries project reaching 9.2 million trays in May.

"With good weather, we can expect the normal surge of excellent quality strawberries in May, and consistent weekly supplies through June," the commission noted.

Blueberries are also on the rise, with sales showing increased numbers during the pandemic.

According to the Highbush Blueberry Council, the blueberry industry is responsible for creating and sustaining more than 44,535 full-time equivalent jobs each year and generating \$4.7 billion in total economic impact.

"The U.S. highbush blueberry industry — including 12,739 blueberry farms — is a powerful financial force," said Kasey Cronquist, president of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council. "Behind every farm are growers who not only tend a truly remarkable superfruit, but also stimulate business activity, create thousands of jobs and contribute mightily to the economy."

Cronquist believes innovation will continue to propel the industry forward. This starts with improved genetics, and includes areas such as advancements in machinery, precision agriculture, robotics, artificial intelligence, and more.

Consumers are eating berries at home, in the office, at school, on the go, mixed in with other food, blended into a smoothie, and hundreds of other ways. Retailers can cater to them all by carrying multiple pack sizes, like small serving size packs for a children's lunch box, or the big bulk packs for consumers who want to enjoy berries throughout the day, perhaps in a smoothie in the morning, a snack in the afternoon, and a topping for dessert.

For retailers, the secret to increasing berry sales is to create eye-catching displays at the front of the produce department, drawing customers in and helping the whole department. Cross-merchandising can also open up improved possibilities for sales.

[Print](#)