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**Fresh pear referendum passes with record approval**

Pear producers in Washington and Oregon voted to continue their federal marketing order this year, with the largest margin in the order's history. Pear growers have the opportunity to vote every six years on whether or not to continue the marketing order. For the marketing order to continue, two-thirds or more of producers voting, or producers representing two-thirds or more of the volume voted needed to vote in favor of continuance.

"Federal Marketing Order 927, established in 1939, is the oldest continuously running federal order in the county," said Kevin Moffitt, manager of the Fresh Pear Committee of Marketing Order 927 and president and CEO of Pear Bureau Northwest. "We are pleased to gain the continued support and confidence of our grower members. While the votes in favor of continuation have been in the mid to high 90 percent range in the last four referendums since I assumed the leadership role of the marketing order 22 years ago, this vote, with 99 percent approval, is the best result in the history of the order."

The marketing order enables the industry to conduct production and marketing research, and promotional initiatives as well as setting regulations to help ensure the best eating quality for pears, all under USDA's oversight.

The Fresh Pear Committee, made up of elected pear growers and shippers from all four growing districts, has the authority to set the assessment rates each year that support consumer and pear agricultural research as well as advertising and promotion. The advertising and promotion funds are passed through to the Pear Bureau Northwest who conducts marketing programs to help increase consumption in the U.S. and worldwide.

"The industry has been working together for over 90 years to increase the consumption of fresh pears among consumers around the world," said Moffitt. "While consumer behaviors and preferences in produce continually change, we strive to keep pears relevant, providing custom category analysis to retailers and capturing consumer attention with innovative and effective promotions and initiatives. It is gratifying to see from the most recent data from the USDA, that per capita pear consumption increased by 25 percent recently, rising from 2.5 pounds in 2015 to three pounds per person in 2021, the latest year available from the USDA."