

PROPOSED: A National Research & Promotion Program for Blackberries

What is an R&P?

A **Research and Promotion program (R&P)** is a commodity program funded by assessments. The programs are authorized by federal legislation, voted on by the industry, and overseen by USDA.

Examples include the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council and National Processed Raspberry Council. Other fruits and vegetables with R&P programs include avocados, peanuts, potatoes, and mushrooms.

Research, information programs, and promotion can all be funded through an R&P program.

Health benefits research is one form of research of particular interest for the proposed blackberry program

What does the blackberry industry look like?

Domestic fresh-market production mostly comes from California and the Southeast. In 2016, California sold approximately 27 million lbs and the Southeast sold about 6 million lbs, according to USDA figures.

Processed blackberries are mostly raised in Oregon, about 48 million lbs annually. Almost 27 million lbs of frozen berries were also imported in 2014.

Imports from Mexico were almost 140 million lbs in 2016 for fresh market blackberries. They make up more than 75% of fresh blackberries sold in the United States.

Production has been increasing, both in the United States and abroad.

What is the proposed program?

Both domestic and imported berries would be assessed.

Both fresh-market and processed berries would be assessed.

Producers marketing less than 30,000 lbs of fresh market berries would not be assessed. Organic berries are also excluded. A threshold for processed berries has not yet been proposed. All imports would be assessed.

First handlers would collect assessments on domestically produced fruit.

U.S. Customs would collect assessments on imports.

The proposed assessment rate on fresh-market berries is one cent (\$.01) per pound (approximately 4.5 cents per flat of half-pint equivalents). For processed berries, the proposed rate is half a cent (\$.005) per pound.

The program would be governed by an 11-15 person Board or Council that proportionally represents the regions and segments of the industry. Industry nominates board candidates and alternates to be appointed by USDA.

A referendum to authorize the program would be conducted by USDA. To go into effect the proposal must be approved by a majority of growers/importers, by entity (farm/company) or pounds sold or both.

Funds raised by the program would total between \$1.5 and \$2 million annually at proposed rates and current production levels.

Where can I find out more?

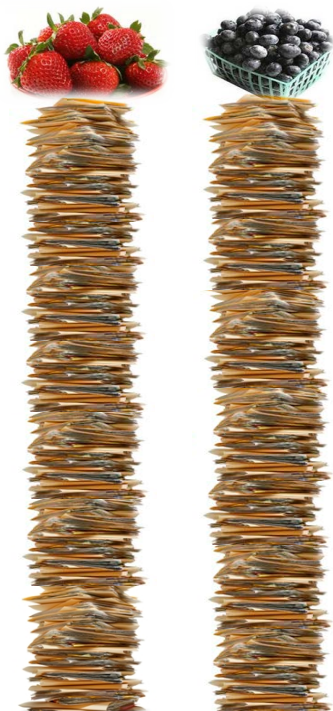
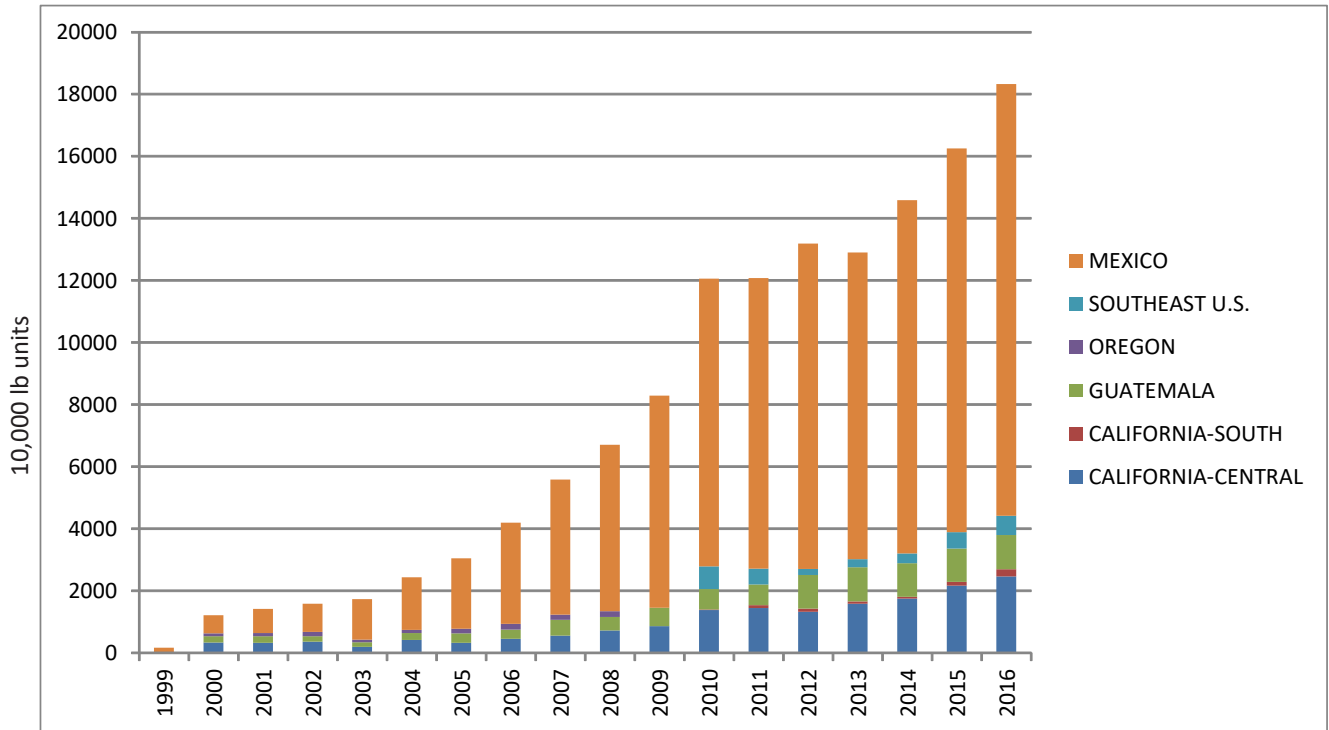
USDA Ag Marketing Service: www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion

North American Raspberry & Blackberry Association: 919-542-4037, info@raspberryblackberry.com, www.raspberryblackberry.com and www.raspberryblackberry.com/blackberryRandP/

Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission: 503-505-3876, darcy@foodfirstmarketing.com, www.oregon-berries.com

Fresh-market Blackberry Shipments reported to USDA Agricultural Marketing Service 2000-2016.

This graph shows the growth in the blackberry market – and why it is essential that imported berries be included in the program.



Maturity of Science on Berry Health Benefits.

Published papers on health benefits of major berries. More research means more good information to share with consumers. *From a presentation in December 2016 by Dr. Britt Burton-Freeman, Illinois Institute of Technology Institute for Food Safety and Health.*

