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Hazelnuts Celebrate 30 Years as Oregon's State Nut

The future is bright as the Oregon Hazelnut industry experiences rapid growth

Sept 25, 2019 – Aurora, Ore. – Oregon's hazelnut harvest is now underway, with this year marking an important milestone: its 30th anniversary as the official state nut of Oregon. With a steady increase in acreage and investments in state-of-the-art facilities, the forecast for the industry is brighter than ever.

While Oregon hazelnuts have been around since the first commercial hazelnut orchard was planted in Springfield in 1903, the Oregon Legislature made the hazelnut the official state nut in 1989 after realizing its economic impact and historical significance.

"In the last 10 years, acreage has increased from 30,000 to more than 80,000, and continues to grow annually," said Meredith Nagely, manager of the Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board (OHMB). "There is demand for Oregon hazelnuts all around the world and here in the U.S. we're seeing an increase in usage by chefs, bakers and food manufacturers."

Hazelnuts are a major economic driver for the state, which produces 99% of the U.S. crop. The crop is valued at \$75-100 million annually, which translates to a total economic impact of more than \$150 million. Due to the mild climate and rich soil, more than 1,000 grower families have found hazelnut production to be an excellent use of land in the Willamette Valley. Many of these families are third- and fourth generation orchardists and are passionate about protecting the productivity of the land and trees for generations to come.



Harvest Season

Harvest began mid-September and will run through the end of October. The crop is estimated at 49,000 tons, which is a 4% decrease from last year's record high crop of 51,000 tons.

"Despite the slight dip this year, we are poised for rapid growth as trees that were planted in the last five years begin to reach nut-bearing age," says Nagely.

Marketing Efforts

Historically, more than 50% of Oregon's hazelnut crop is exported to Asia. However, with this increase in acreage, OHMB is working to increase domestic demand and diversify global markets. This includes educating large-scale U.S. foodservice operators and manufacturers on the benefits of Oregon

hazelnuts, as well as exhibiting at international trade shows to establish awareness and relationships with large foreign buyers.

About Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board

The Oregon Hazelnut Marketing Board was established in 1949 by the growers and handlers of hazelnuts. The purpose of the board is to set quality standards for the industry, ensure all imported product meet U.S. standards and provide funding for promotion of hazelnuts through research, education and promotion programs. For more information, visit oregonhazelnuts.org.

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