



USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Research & Promotion Programs

RESEARCH & PROMOTION PROGRAMS



Blueberries



AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Research and Promotions Programs Branch helps the produce and specialty crop industries expand domestic and foreign markets for their commodities. Through these self-help programs, commodity groups are able to establish their own board of industry representatives who conduct promotion, market research, production research and new product development for the benefit of their industries.

The programs are funded by assessments collected by the board and, for import assessments, by the U.S. Customs Service and operate under the supervision of the **Research and Promotion Programs Branch**.

Requested by industry, **Research and Promotion Programs** usually do not take effect until they are approved in a national referendum by those who would be covered by the program. From industry nominations, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture appoints national boards to carry out these programs. The boards may be composed of producers, handlers, importers, processors, as well as others in the marketing chain.

There are currently nine **Research and Promotion Programs** for fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops and they include...

Highbush Blueberries. Under the program assessments are collected by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council on cultivated blueberries grown in and imported into the United States. Producers and importers pay an annual assessment of \$12 per ton, which generates over \$4 million annually to conduct generic consumer and industrial market development activities in the United States and abroad. The Council consists of 14 members and their alternates.

Hass Avocados. Approved in September 2002, the Hass Avocado Board works to increase U.S. consumption of Hass avocados. A 12-member Board administers the program under USDA supervision. The program covers fresh domestic and imported Hass avocados. Exports of domestic product are exempt from assessments. The assessment rate is 2.5 cents per pound, gathering nearly \$24 million annually.

Honey. Under the Order, a one cent per pound assessment is collected on honey and honey products packed or imported into the United States. Packers and importers marketing less than 250,000 pounds of honey per year are exempt from paying assessments. The Board consists of three first handlers, two importers, one importer-handler, three producers, and one marketing cooperative representatives and their alternates. The program is expected to collect approximately \$3.5 million a year.



Mangos. Approved November 2003, the 20 member National Mango Board is comprised of a first handler, importers, wholesalers/retailers, as well as domestic and foreign producers working to increase the consumption of mangos in the United States. The program covers fresh and imported mangos. First handlers and importers of less than 500,000 pounds are exempt from assessments. The assessment rate is ½ cent per pound, gathering about \$7 million annually.

Mushrooms. Producers and importers who produce or import, on average over 500,000 pounds of mushrooms for the fresh market annually pay an assessment of \$0.005 cents per pound to the Mushroom Council. With an annual income of over \$3 million, the council conducts consumer, foodservice, and retail promotions in the United States. A nine member Council administers the research and promotion program for mushrooms.

Popcorn. Processors of more than 4 million pounds of popcorn per year pay an assessment rate of 6 cents per hundredweight to the Popcorn Board. Assessment income totals about \$1 million annually. Thirty-five processors pay assessments under the program. The Board, which began operating in 1998, is composed of nine processors.

Peanuts. Peanut producers pay to the National Peanut Board an assessment of 1 percent of the value of all farmers' stock peanuts sold. The program generates approximately \$7 million annually. The Board, which consists of 11 producer members and their alternates, conduct promotion and research projects in the United States and abroad.

Potatoes. The National Potato Promotion Board collects 3 cents per hundredweight on all Irish potatoes produced in and imported into the United States. The Board's annual assessment income is about \$17 million, which is paid by producers of 5 or more acres of potatoes and importers of potatoes and potato products. The Board, which has been in operation since 1972, promotes potatoes and potato products in the United States and abroad.

Watermelons. Watermelon producers with 10 acres or more, importers of 150,000 pounds or more, and handlers pay assessments to the National Watermelon Promotion Board. Producers and handlers each pay 3 cents per hundredweight, and importers pay 6 cents per hundredweight. The Board uses the nearly \$3 million it collects to conduct production research, and to promote watermelons to consumers and retail food service operations.

**For Assistance with
Research and Promotion Programs
Contact...**
**Sonia Jimenez, Chief,
Research and Promotion Branch,
Tel. (202) 720-9915,
sonia.jimenez@usda.gov**