

# Cranberry Group Gets Export Funding

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WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. (AP) — Love cranberries? According to an industry trade group, Americans are far from the only ones who do.

In the past 20 years, the American cranberry industry has gone from exporting about 5 percent of its product to other countries to exporting about 35 percent, according to an industry expert.

The Cranberry Marketing Committee has shown growth in foreign markets, said Tom Lochner, executive director of the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association.

"We think there's great potential for future growth," Lochner told [Daily Tribune Media](#) [1].

The Cranberry Marketing Committee represents the United States cranberry industry and does promotions focused on educating people about how to use and benefit from cranberries.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced it awarded the Cranberry Marketing Committee about \$1.6 million in 2014 for expanding export markets for the little red berry. The 2014 Farm Bill made the money available, according to a USDA news release.

The amount is similar to amounts that the USDA has given the Cranberry Marketing Committee in the past, Lochner said.

The marketing funds from the USDA are important to the cranberry industry, Lochner said. The Cranberry Marketing Board combines the USDA money with money from growers and cranberry processors to develop international markets, he said.

It's important that the cranberry industry build exports to foreign markets to utilize the cranberry crop, said Fran Podvin, a member of Ocean Spray Cranberry's board of directors.

"We're currently in an oversupply situation," Podvin said.

About 25 percent to 30 percent of all of Ocean Spray's Cranberry products are sold to foreign markets, Podvin said.

"That's been a really growing part of Ocean Spray's business," Podvin said.

Wisconsin produces 65 percent of the nation's cranberries and more than half of the cranberries grown in the world, Lochner said. Wood County is the biggest producer

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of cranberries in the state, making the crop's success important to central Wisconsin.

"(Expanding the foreign market) helps build the economy in central Wisconsin and in Wisconsin in general," Lochner said.

If the demand for cranberries increases, growers can charge more for their crops, which helps the economy in central Wisconsin, Podvin said.

The United Kingdom is a large market for cranberry juice, Lochner said.

In October, a group of South Korean journalists, most of whom were food writers, visited central Wisconsin to learn about the cranberry industry and what can be done with cranberries. They visited growers, toured processing plants and ate a wide range of food made with cranberries.

The South Korean journalists' trip is an example of the kind of things the Cranberry Marketing Board does to increase foreign markets, Lochner said.

It costs a tremendous amount of money to enter a foreign market and develop sales, Podvin said. The cranberry industry puts in a great deal more money than the USDA gives, he said. The annual grant from the USDA for developing foreign markets is a big help.

The Cranberry Marketing Board educates people in other countries about the cranberry's taste and health benefits, Lochner said. They also show the wide range of products that have cranberries in them.

Companies sell dried cranberries as an ingredient to manufacturers in other countries, Lochner said.

Since North America is the only place that grows cranberries, many cultures don't know what they are, Podvin said.

"There are many countries that don't even have a word for cranberries," Podvin said.

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