Abstract:

The Pacific Northwest region of the United States excels in the production of high quality sweet cherries (*Prunus avium* L.) for fresh consumption. Sweet cherries are produced on ~15,000 ha by just over 3,000 growers in the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Oregon and Washington represent the bulk of the production with over 14,000 ha of sweet cherries between the two states. Northwest cherry growers produced an estimated 7.8 million case (9.1 kg) equivalents of cherries worth an estimated $230.5 million in the 2000 crop year. Of that production, 34% was exported to over 32 countries throughout the world. While this is a remarkable achievement, access for the export of sweet cherries to other countries is constrained by a number of factors. The Northwest Horticultural Council (NHC) represents these growers on federal and international policy issues including international trade. The NHC works with various U.S. governmental agencies and other industry organizations to analyze market demand (affected by local economies, cultural factors and transportation issues), tariff and tax-related import restrictions and non-tariff barriers. Each of these factors, independently and collectively, can have a major impact on the industry's ability to sell cherries in a given market. Among non-tariff barriers, the most important are pest-based phytosanitary requirements and a growing disharmony regarding pesticide maximum residue limits among international trading partners. Specific examples are discussed, with a focus on issues currently being pursued in the trade policy arena by the NHC on behalf of the Northwest fresh sweet cherry industry for the goal of making Northwest sweet cherries more broadly available to discriminating consumers around the world.