



By Maura Maxwell

Wednesday 3rd December 2014, 9:31 GMT

## US sweet potato exports surge



Global demand has risen sharply thanks to promotional efforts American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute

**E**xport sales of American sweet potatoes have climbed 80 per cent in the past five years reaching a record US\$95m according to the American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute (ASPMI). Shipments have jumped sharply to regions targeted by the association's international market development efforts, and are continuing to rise this year.

"There's no doubt that global demand for US sweet potatoes is on the rise," said ASPMI president Johnny Barnes. "And thanks to our efforts at introducing American sweet potatoes to health-conscious consumers

around the world, we believe we're on the cusp of seeing unprecedented exports over the coming years."

ASPMI was formed in 2013 to promote the unique attributes of US sweet potatoes domestically and abroad, and is already seeing progress in the targeted European markets. Research shows that awareness of US sweet potatoes in Europe is low, but rising. Exports to Europe are up 17 per cent so far this year.

ASPMI leverages USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)-administered programmes to promote sweet potato exports. These cost-share programmes, such as the Emerging Markets

Program (EMP) and Market Access Program (MAP), allow the association to reach emerging markets that were untapped until recently.

"Most sweet potato operations are small to medium family-owned farms, Barnes notes. "EMP and MAP funds give them the assistance needed to access new export markets," he adds.