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Strong start for CMI Orchards

Northwest cherry season off to a cracking start, with growth anticipated in 2021 cherry crop



Excellent weather conditions, most notably an absence of significant frost events, have contributed to outstanding quality and great sizing of this year's Northwest cherry crop, according to CMI Orchards.

The Washington-based producer is anticipating 17 per cent growth in volume, compared to the 2020 crop.

"We are seeing consistent spread throughout our growing districts, with Skeena and Sweetheart cherries showing exceptional size and quality," explained Joel Hewitt, domestic sales organic manager for the company.

Export manager Scott Agnew said the timing of the crop was a bit later than last year. "[Despite this] it is lining up nicely with market demand with limited overlap with the California crop. We expect

harvest to continue throughout the remainder of June and July," he said.

Vice president of marketing, George Harter, described CMI's unique selling points as second to none. "The Northwest cherry season is short and sweet, and our goal is to deliver the best sales opportunities for our customers creating a win-win situation," said Harter.

"We're expecting to peak just in time for Independence Day celebrations, and our American Dream programme is a great tool for retailers to stir up excitement in store with eye-catching, patriotic displays and packaging."

CMI Orchards brand manager, Rochelle Bohm, said cherries are one of the most profitable items in produce. "We work hard to provide exceptional and consistent quality across all brands and varieties we supply," she outlined.

"Matched with our innovative marketing and advertising efforts and support, we're able to help retailers introduce new varieties to customers and maximise sales," added Bohm.

As for the promotional campaigns this season, marketing specialist Danelle Huber said CMI Orchards continues to revise and leverage its efforts to drive sales with their retail consumers.

"We use a variety of methods, including beacon targeting to digital out-of-home, which allows us to connect with consumers as they make buying decisions. It has been a profitable strategy for our retailer customers," said Huber.