

Priorities for the Michigan's Sweet Cherry Industry

Based on Discussion from the Michigan Sweet Cherry Summit, November 11, 2008

Northwest Michigan Horticultural Research Station

Nikki Rothwell, Bill Shane, Greg Lang, and Erin Lizotte

Review: A Sweet Cherry Summit was held to develop a roadmap for the future of Michigan's sweet cherry industry. Marketing strategies, horticultural techniques, and consumer demands have changed in recent years. The Summit brought together sweet cherry producers, handlers, processors, marketers, and industry leaders to discuss the current status of the industry as well as targets for the future. The main Summit outcome was to develop short, mid-range, and long-term goals to ensure that the Michigan industry is adapting to appropriate changes in the industry and remaining competitive in the global marketplace.

Prioritization: In order to set research priorities, outreach goals, and industry needs, we need your input on prioritizing future objectives. Fruit quality improvement and developing more efficient production systems were two perpetual themes at the Summit; these priorities are therefore assumed to be important and will not be listed in this prioritization exercise. The survey below was based on the Summit discussion, and the following specific key points have been emphasized to achieve more concrete and attainable outcomes.

The table represents major needs for the Michigan sweet cherry industry and the three market segments of the industry: brine, processed dark sweets, and fresh market. For each of the needs' categories on the left, please rank their importance in the boxes below for each of the three subdivisions. The ranking is on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is low priority, 3 is moderately important, and 5 is high priority.

Sweet Cherry Markets

Industry Needs	Brine	Canned/Frozen	Fresh Market
Stem-on harvest			
Dwarfing rootstocks			
Finding and testing new varieties			
Thinners			
Growth regulator aids			
New planting/training/pruning systems			
Growing trees under tunnels			
Plant nutrition			
Irrigation and water needs			
New harvesting technology			
Investigating fresh market sweet in MI			
Labor issues			
Researching marketing strategies			
Cooling technologies			
New packaging			
Eliminating pits/pit fragments			
GAP standards			
Coordinating cooperation in industry			
Percentage of your acreage currently in production for each market			
Percentage of acreage you would like to be in each market in 5 years			
Percentage of acreage you would like to be in each market in 10 years			

How should we fund this research?

Other Comments:

Please fill out the Sweet Cherry Industry Priorities survey and mail it back to the NW Michigan Hort. Research Station, 6686 S. Center Highway, Traverse City, MI 49684