

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Philippine Market Opens to US Fresh Blueberries

Country: Philippines

Post: Manila

Report Category: Fresh Fruit, Promotion Opportunities

Prepared By: Ramona Singian

Approved By: Morgan Haas

Report Highlights:

On May 24, 2020, the Philippines will formally open its market to U.S. fresh highbush blueberries. Since the United States is the only country with official access to the Philippine market, U.S. suppliers are poised to take advantage of the opportunity to supply the Philippine retail and food service sectors. Traders estimate sales of U.S. fresh blueberries could reach \$500,000 this season, with greater potential in the years to come.

General Information

The Philippine Department of Agriculture's (DA) regulation allowing complete market access for U.S. fresh blueberries will take effect on May 24, 2020, making the United States the only country with formal market access. U.S. suppliers and Philippine importers now have much stronger incentive to cultivate trade relationships to supply the expanding food retail sector, and eventually the food service sector once COVID-19 community quarantine measures are eased.

In the past, DA had allowed limited and intermittent importation of fresh blueberries specifically for hotels, restaurants, and high-end supermarkets. Sales over the past five years (2015 to 2019) averaged \$150,000 each year (roughly 20 metric tons). With formal market access in place for the entire Philippine market, multiple trade contacts forecast U.S. sales could reach \$500,000 this season and exceed \$1,000,000 in succeeding years if there is a concerted marketing effort to increase consumer awareness on the availability, quality, and health benefits of U.S. fresh blueberries.

Like all fresh fruit importation, a licensed importer must secure a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Clearance (SPSIC) from the DA's Bureau of Plant Industry. Products must not load for export before their issuance, must be shipped within 20 days following their issuance, and must arrive in the Philippines within 60 days from the must ship-out date.

The full import requirements are outlined in the Administrative Circular, which can be found here: <https://law.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/DA-AC-No-05-Series-of-2020.pdf>.

Tariff Rates

The Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff rate for blueberries is seven percent and subject to 12 percent Value Added Tax or VAT.

Competition

Aside from the United States being the only approved country to source fresh imported blueberries, the Philippines has only very limited local production. Consistently supplying the multitude of hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, and other retail outlets with quality product remains a challenge for Philippine growers due to limited production area and the lack of adequate post-harvest facilities and cold chain infrastructure.

Further Information and Assistance

USDA-FAS at the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines is ready to help exporters of U.S. agricultural products achieve their objectives in the Philippines. Contact us at AgManila@fas.usda.gov

Attachments:

No Attachments.