

Marketing Opportunities for New York Stone Fruit in Canada

Ken Slingerland

Tender Fruit and Grape Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Vineland, Ontario, Canada

Ontario has a very diverse stone-fruit industry with peaches (fresh and processing), plums, cherries (sweet and sour), nectarines and apricots. Approximately 90% of all tender fruit production in the province of Ontario is located in the Niagara Peninsula, north of the escarpment running east to west from the Niagara River to the City of Hamilton. The unique climate of the area provides a preferred location for stone-fruit production and represents over 75% of the production in Canada.

There are currently 600 tender-fruit growers (includes pears) in the province. Ontario produces 50,000 tons of tender fruit with a farm value worth approximately \$50 million. Table 1 shows the tonnage and value by crop.

All of Ontario's fresh market production is marketed as 'Product of Ontario' under the 'Foodland Ontario' logo. This logo has brand recognition and consumers recognize the logo as a symbol of fresh, safe food. The shipper dealers also have their brand names attached for their brand loyalty (Figure 1).

Major markets include Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and the rest of the Canadian East Coast, and as far west as Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.

There are five sour cherry processors in Ontario. Kraft Canada Ltd. in St. Davids and Cherry Lane Frozen Foods in Vineland are the two peach processors. Both companies process peaches but Kraft Canada Ltd. also cans pears. Kraft has seen some major expansions over the

New York pear and peach growers have found marketing opportunities with the processing industry in Ontario Canada. Other marketing opportunities might include the fresh market for stone fruits or pears.

last 10 years with increased product lines and sales, which has resulted in a major plantings of new Vineland-Research-Station-developed cultivars Vulcan, Vinegold, Virgil and Venture. Thirty-five growers from Western New York located from Lewiston to east of Rochester have been part of Kraft's expansion plans and have collectively planted 136,000 trees or approximately 700 acres.

Marketing opportunities for New York growers have mainly been in the processing industry as they have been part of Kraft's future plans to diversify production in the east. Growers that have taken advantage of this opportunity will be part of any future plans as markets increase or production declines in Ontario. Other opportunities for fresh-peach marketing in the future might include different packages, logos and brand names.

Fresh Market	Tons	Value (\$000) Cdn
Peach	17,686	\$17,065
Plums	2,030	\$ 2,380
Sweet Cherries	1,800	\$ 3,200
Processing		
Sweet Cherries	460	\$ 457
Sour Cherries	4,321	\$ 4,587
Peaches	6,695	\$ 3,619



Figure 1. Vineland Growers' shipping box with the "Product of Ontario" and the 'Foodland Ontario' logos.



Ken Slingerland is an extension specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Foods located in the Niagara peninsula who specializes in stone fruits and grapes.