



## Ontario Tender Fruit Growers

After a very late spring frost in 2015, many in the industry expected significant damage to tender fruit crops. Even at the first estimate in July, we projected far less of a peach crop than we ended up with. The main producing area in Niagara had a good sized crop with some damage in the outer areas, but at the end of the season, fresh and processing crop volumes were + 9% vs. 2014 and I am pleased to report gross values are estimated to be + 15%.

2015 was the last year of our promotional funding through the Local Food Fund and with this we were able to execute a number of in-store campaigns as well as social media and traditional advertising on television, in subway cars and magazines. This funding; combined with the additional advertising and in-store support provided by Foodland Ontario was greatly appreciated and we believe crucial, in increasing consumer awareness of locally grown.

Preliminary gross values and volumes of the 2015 crop by commodity are included below. The numbers are only a small indication of the overall success of the season. Great quality and support from consumers and retail partners alike resulted in a brisk sales cycle.

Research and access to new varieties continues to be an important part of our board's mandate, with emphasis on results that growers can implement on farm to help increase tree health, productivity and efficiency of operations. Our research activities for 2015 included;

- Expansion of the Fruit Tracker Management System to include worker health and safety programs, cost of production, automated soil moisture monitoring and quality and cold storage tracking modules
- Tender Fruit Alert – provides industry with current weather, alerts for potential bud damage, bud hardiness and survival information. [www.tenderfruitalert.ca](http://www.tenderfruitalert.ca)
- Black Knot – evaluation of fungicides, variety susceptibility and environmental influences on infections (temperature, wetness duration)
- Reducing Chilling Injury in peaches and nectarines – investigation of effects of temperature on main varieties
- New Variety Development – continuation of evaluation and commercialization of varieties through the Tender Fruit Evaluation Committee in partnership with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and University of Guelph
- Cost of Production – in partnership with Ontario Apple Growers developing a system for growers to track production costs in Fruit Tracker and benchmark with industry average
- Cold Chain Management – investigating various cold chain systems and effects on quality of peaches
- Biosecurity Initiative – establishing an elite mother block of virus free plant material for existing and new varieties
- Worker Health and Safety – in partnership with Ontario Apple Growers and Grape Growers of Ontario, development of a comprehensive Health and Safety Program for growers including downloadable customizable manuals and holding workshops for growers to obtain their mandatory supervisor awareness training certificates

2013 – 2015 VOLUME AND GROSS VALUE

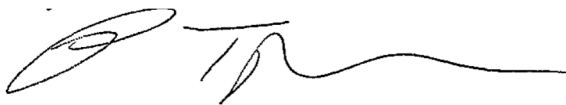
	2013	2014	2015		2013	2014	2015	
	Volume	Volume	Volume	%Change	Value	Value	Value	%Change
	Tons	Tons	Tons	'15 vs '14	\$	\$	\$	'15 vs '14
<b>Fresh Market</b>								
Peaches	18,388	17,422	18,954	9%	27,491,431	\$ 27,875,200	\$ 31,842,794	14%
Pears	3,054	2,073	3,176	53%	3,811,464	\$ 2,626,734	\$ 4,861,570	85%
Plums & Prunes	2,506	1,913	1,922	0%	5,641,296	\$ 4,628,791	\$ 4,811,751	4%
Nectarines	2,574	2,515	2,735	9%	4,761,626	\$ 5,331,800	\$ 6,394,521	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,522</b>	<b>23,922</b>	<b>26,787</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>41,705,818</b>	<b>\$ 40,462,525</b>	<b>\$ 47,910,636</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Processing</b>								
Sweet Cherries	16	16	10	-38%	\$ 29,117.00	\$ 27,451.00	\$ 17,847.90	-35%
Sour Cherries	6,039	4,325	4,070	-6%	\$ 9,898,272	\$ 7,515,136	\$ 7,413,618	-1%
Peaches	1,662	799	982	23%	\$ 994,827	\$ 551,419	\$ 688,460	25%
Pears	496	273	168	-38%	\$ 297,771	\$ 163,880	\$ 117,873	-28%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,213</b>	<b>5,413</b>	<b>5,230</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>\$ 11,219,987</b>	<b>\$ 8,257,886</b>	<b>\$ 8,237,799</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>COMBINED</b>	<b>34,735</b>	<b>29,335</b>	<b>32,017</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>\$ 52,925,805</b>	<b>\$ 48,720,411</b>	<b>\$ 56,148,435</b>	<b>15%</b>

Crop insurance continues to be a crucial risk management tool for our growers. We have been working with Agricorp over the past few years on analyzing coverage and implementing changes that make crop insurance plans more effective for our growers. These changes to date include;

- Yield buffering to lessen impact of extreme yields
- In season pricing for sour cherries
- Fixed claim prices for peaches/nectarines, pears, plums and sweet cherries using a three year instead of a 5 year average
- Separating peach and nectarine plans to allow for separate claims
- Working towards a tree mortality plan for 2017

In closing, 2015 was a very successful year for our growers and stakeholders and we will continue to build on these initiatives in the coming years to increase growth opportunities for our industry.

Respectfully submitted January 2016



Phil Tregunno  
Chair, Ontario Tender Fruit Growers