

As more blueberries come online in the coming years the industry will need to find new and innovative ways to raise consumption. As part of this, the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) has engaged with key players outside the fruit industry to develop new blueberry-based products. 

USHBC executive director Mark Villata told attendees of the International Blueberry Organization (IBO) Summit about the rising opportunities for blueberries in cosmetics and pet food products.

"Pet foods are an area where numbers are going up - we're looking at unique areas where people can put their blueberries," he said.

"In the States a lot of people feed their dogs and cats better than they feed their children in some cases, and they want healthful products.

"Then on the cosmetic side, there's this whole trend of beauty from within and putting in good foods to produce a healthy glow, so blueberries fit right into that."

He told *www.freshfruitportal.com* these sort of products were still a small segment of the total market, but with time manufactured products could become 10-15% of the blueberry market.

"We actually fund a food manufacture publicity program where we go out and meet face to face with manufacturers, talk to them about blueberries, attend a lot of trade shows both in the States and overseas.

"In the States we do a lot of work with the Institute of Food Technologists. We go to regional meetings where representatives come for table top presentations, and we give them information about blueberries. We're very active in generating the food manufacturing side of the equation."

### **New markets**

In terms of other outlets for increased blueberry volumes, Villata pointed to progress in neegotiations for improved access in East Asia.

"Right now Oregon has access to Korea, so we're working with the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) trying to expand that, and with having Oregon already there that's a good step in the door," he said.

"We're pretty positive that we can at least get the West Coast into Korea maybe in the next couple of years; ideally we'll get total U.S. access but probably West Coast will be the next area.

"China looks promising. It takes a long time to get through but we've got a lot of positive momentum, a lot of positive reactions from the Chinese themselves."

He said other markets the industry was aiming for included Chile, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, but China and South Korea were top of the list.

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