

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer has issued a request to the International Trade Commission (ITC) to initiate a Section 201 global safeguard investigation into the extent to which increased imports of blueberries have caused serious injury or threat thereof to domestic blueberry growers.

This is one of a number of actions announced in the *Report on Seasonal and Perishable Products in U.S. Commerce* jointly released by USTR, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce earlier this month.

USTR's request includes all imports within the product descriptions under the following statistical reporting categories in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States:

- 0810400029 (cultivated blueberries, including highbush, fresh or chilled);
- 0810400026 (certified organic blueberries, fresh or chilled);
- 0810400024 (wild blueberries, fresh or chilled);
- 0811902024 (wild blueberry, uncooked or cooked by steaming or boiling in water, frozen);
- 0811902030 (blueberries, certified organic, cultivated (including highbush), uncooked or cooked by steaming or boiling in water, frozen); and
- 0811902040 (blueberries, cultivated (including highbush), uncooked or cooked by steaming or boiling in water, NESOI, frozen).

"President Trump recognizes the challenges faced by farmers across the country, and today's action is just one of a number of steps the Administration is taking to support American producers of seasonal and perishable agricultural products," said U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

The investigation could lead to tariffs, quotas, or marketing orders for blueberry imports.

The American Blueberry Growers Alliance ("ABGA") said it applauds USTR's request and expects that the investigation will result in a remedy that allows the domestic industry to "recover from the harmful effects of surging blueberry imports".

"The flood of foreign imports of blueberries has caused significant damage to growers from coast-to-coast and across the heartland of this country," stated Jerome Crosby, Chair of the American Blueberry Growers Alliance.

"At a time when domestic food security is especially critical, this action is essential to preserve American farms, our families' way of life, and our communities, and we look

forward to working with the ITC in conducting its investigation.”

However, critics of the investigation argue that blueberry imports have helped to provide consumers with fruit year-round and have helped to significantly increase consumption.