New Specialty Crops for California

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UC Cooperative Extension - Santa Maria
UC Statewide Small Farm Program

California Offers A Special Mix

• Diverse growing environments
• Large, diverse markets
Specialty Crops VS Specialty Crops

- USDA traditional definition includes all
- Improve current marketing or ... investigate new options
  - Direct vs. Wholesale?
  - time / volume tradeoffs
- New crops, products
  extend time in market with current crops,
  more profitable market window?
  or
  New crop?

Specialty Crop Marketing

- Marketing more than half
- Improve current marketing or ... investigate new options
  - Direct vs. Wholesale?
  - time / volume tradeoffs
- New crops, products
  extend time in market with current crops,
  more profitable market window?
  or
  New crop?
Specialty Crops

- Often low volume / high value
- New species - new to area?
- New product? created by market or developed
- New market for existing product?
- New market window?

Specialty Crop Research and Development
Key Elements

- Market signals guide crop selection
- Industry logistics? labor, transport, cooling, sales
- Match agronomy / agroecology
- Historical prices vs. projected costs
Many important concerns

• How will you sell the product?
• Does the wholesaler know the product?
• Current supplies? established buyers? Special packing, post harvest or shipping needs?
• Price? Account settlements?
  Market demand?
• Time vs. value tradeoffs - Does often volume related
• Early in process, costs are high learning curve

Competitive Advantages?

• Climate
• Production costs
• Transport Costs
• Offshore vs. domestic
  shelf-life and hidden costs?
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(AMOUNTS ARE SHOWN IN UNITS OF 100,000 LBS)
2000 Wholesale Fresh Blueberry Prices
L.A. Terminal Market

Imported Fruit

$ Per Flat

CD - 12 / 1 pt

1 Jan 1 Feb 1 Mar 1 Apr 1 May 1 Jun 1 Jul 1 Aug 1 Sep 1 Oct 1 Nov 1 Dec

Domestic Sources

$ Per Flat

FL CA GA OR
Fresh Blueberry Packs

- 12 / 6 oz
- 12 / 5.6 oz
- 12 / 4.4 oz
- 12 / 3.5 oz
- 12 / 100 gm
- 12 / 125 gm
- 12 / 160 gm
- 12 / 175 gm
- 12 / 1 pt
- 12 / 12 oz
- ?? 4 / 1 qt
- ?? 2 / 2 1/2 lb

3 Year Average Wholesale Fresh Blueberry Prices