

Haskap & Japan

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I have been in communication with a Haskap processor in Japan who wishes to buy fruit from Canada. We have begun a dialog to start cooperation, which I hope will lead to an export market and bring processing expertise here. Here is a list of facts regarding Japanese Haskap I have recently learned:

Total Japanese production is about 100M tons / year.

This particular company would like to buy the following:

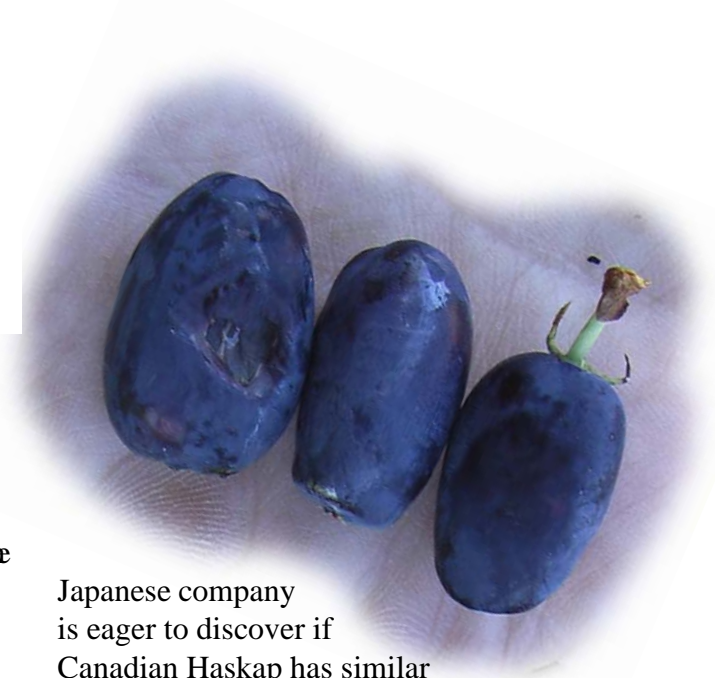
- 300M tons in 3 years
- 600M tons in 5 years
- 1200M tons in 10 years

If they could get them today, they would pay \$10 CDN / Kg delivered to Japan. (this is 5x the price of our most expensive fruit crops!)

Delivery of frozen meat to Japan from Saskatoon costs 0.30 / Kg if you use the large shipping containers that hold 45M tons. It is most likely that the Japanese company would want frozen fruit.

In Japan, yield from mature bushes is about 1 Kg/bush after 5 or 6 years. (In Saskatoon we were getting that amount in our 3rd and fourth years!)

In Japan they are hand picking the fruit which may partially explain the high price per Kg. (U of S research will focus on mechanically harvesting the fruit)



The Japanese company is eager to discover if Canadian Haskap has similar quality to Japanese Haskap.

Japanese grown produce commands higher prices than imports. Even if the fruit was higher quality, it is unlikely that Canadian Haskap would replace Japanese Haskap in the marketplace. If there was a large supply, it is likely that the Canadian supply would be used in processing, while Japanese Haskap would be sold as fresh produce.

Haskap is regularly promoted in Japan as having many health benefits. If Canadian growers could take into account the Japanese Organic Standards, comply with them and become certified, Canadian grown Haskap would have tremendous selling potential in Japan.

The company representative suggested that the company might be interested in working with us for 3 years on this, but probably wouldn't be much interested if it took longer than that to begin shipping back to them. He strongly suggested that we send the company regular reports on our progress if we enter into a cooperative relationship. (Note: the representative is a local business person who was asked to be a go-between on this, he is not a full time employee of the Japanese company).

I proposed to exchange fruit with this company this coming season which will allow me to better understand the quality of their fruit. I am hoping they will evaluate our advanced



selections and let us know which ones would be suitable for their needs. Once the 'acceptable' selections are identified I want to mass propagate them through tissue culture and other means. Fortunately, we have already done the research on how to propagate these plants in tissue culture. I believe if we got several greenhouses and nurseries involved we could fast track the growth of the honeysuckle bushes, and shave a year or two off the time it takes for them to come into full production. Haskap

usually produce fruit in the 1st season following planting, but if the starting plants are bigger than the yield will be larger.

While the interest shown by this Japanese company is exciting, I think it would be very wise to investigate other markets and uses for this crop.

There are also other companies in Japan that use Haskap, so there is a potential for further growth and competitive prices offered by buyers.

I am also hoping to get Provincial or Federal funding for this project but it might also be possible to fund this through plant sales. I have been working closely with the U of S Industry Liaison Office to develop a strategy for this emerging project. Again if you, or your associations are interested in working with this project, send me an enthusiastic letter of support that I will use in my grant proposals, and I can put you on a list of interested growers to be contacted.