

Port of Wilmington

Makes Getting 5 A Day Possible,



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) suggests that diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer and other chronic diseases.

Following a decline in U.S. fruit consumption in the mid-1990s, the National Cancer Institute implemented the 5 A Day program, encouraging five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day for a healthy diet.

The 5 A Day for Better Health program is the nation's largest public-private nutrition education initiative to increase consumption to a minimum of five fruits and vegetables per day for improved public health. As a result, today fruit is in greater demand in the U.S. and Canada. Nowhere in the Mid-Atlantic region is this more evident than at the Port of Wilmington where an abundance of fresh fruit arrives during the North American agricultural off-season.

Last year, more than one and a half million tons of tropical, deciduous and citrus fruits were imported through the Port of Wilmington. Bananas and other tropical fruits, like plantains and pineapples, arrive year-round from the Tropics. The greatest number of shipments from the Southern Hemisphere arrive from late fall to late spring – opposite the growing season in North America. Between domestically-grown fruit and fruit that is imported to supplement demand during the off season, American and Canadian consumers can now get their "5 A Day" year-round.

Since 1998, fruit for consumption imported nationally has grown 15 percent. In 2003, 7.6 million metric tons of fruit were imported to the U.S. That's a lot of fruit cocktail!

Fruit arrives at the Port of Wilmington from places like Morocco, New Zealand, Chile and Latin American countries aboard container and break bulk ships. The fruit comes in as both containerized and palletized break bulk cargo.

In Winter 2003, Chilean cargo arriving at the Port of Wilmington increased 25 percent over the previous year. This year, shipments arrived a week earlier with ship calls expected to continue through mid-June. The Port of Wilmington had to provide an additional 53,000 sq. ft. of cold storage space to accommodate the growth in fruit cargo. The fruit was received with great demand and was distributed within days of ship discharge to the local market.

"A Chilean ship can carry as much as 6,200 pallets of fruit, and 70 containers, at a time," said DSPC Director of Operations Fred Fitzgerald. "It was a very active winter, with the Port handling 1,231 containers so far this season," he added.

Consumers could get their 5 A Day without eating the same fruit twice just from fruit imported through the Port of Wilmington. To learn more about the 5 A Day campaign and how you can eat a healthier diet, visit www.5aday.org

Year-Round



Here are some facts on fruits the Port handles seasonally and year-round.

Apples

Popular varieties like Braeburn, Fuji, Royal Gala, and Granny Smith come from New Zealand and Chile. They arrive from late spring through summer. Last year, the Port saw an increase in total apple imports from the year before.



Clementines

The arrival of Moroccan clementines from October through December is a greatly anticipated event by consumers in the U.S. and Canada. More than 12,000 tons of the tiny, sweet citrus fruit arrived at the Port in 2003.



Pears

Varieties like Bosc, Bartlett, D'Anjou and Comice, and Asian varieties like Hosui (also called Shinko or Singo) and Nijisseiki (also called Shinseiki) are imported from New Zealand or Chile and generally arrive at the Port from spring through early summer.



Bananas, Pineapples and Other Tropical Fruit

The Port of Wilmington is renowned worldwide as the largest banana port in North America, earning the Port a reputation as the "Top Banana" among ports. Bananas, pineapples and other tropical fruit from Central America arrive year-round at the Port. The Port saw a five percent increase in volume in this category last year.



Grapes

Chilean red and white grapes with names like Thompsons, Sugerones, Red Flames, Black Seedless and Red Globe arrive at the Port December through April. This year, the Port expects to receive an abundance of grapes from Chile. It forecasts about 200,000 short tons of Chilean fruit, mostly grapes before the end of the season.



Stone Fruits

Peaches, nectarines, plums and cherries from Chile arrive late fall to spring. Peaches and nectarines come in many white- and yellow-fleshed varieties. Plums range from dark (black, purple and red) to light (yellow, green) varieties. Cherries typically arrive December through February. They come in the richly sweet red/black and the mildly sweet golden, or Rainier, varieties.

