



Success Story: Michigan Company Takes its First Steps to Exporting

In August of 2016, Herkner Farms, located in Traverse City, Michigan, in the 1st Congressional District, attended Food Export's 2016 Midwest Buyers Mission in Lansing, Michigan. They spoke with several buyers from Asian and Central American markets during the one-on-one meetings. Since then, the company has had contact with many potential buyers and is excited for future trade shows and finding more export opportunities.

Bruce Byl, President of Herkner Farms, said, "We will continue to attend [Food Export] events in the Midwest. By expanding the number of markets we can sell our products in, I'm confident that my opportunities to build relationships will continue to increase. Furthermore, being a small and nimble company will allow us to react quickly to any distributor/importer special needs and make us a more attractive investment." As a result of expanding their market and being able to work closely with customers, Herkner Farms has been able to meet with several buyers about possible exports. Additionally, as a would be first time exporter, the Buyers Mission has taught Byl and his company how to interact with international customers and what to expect the next time they participate in an export activity.

Herkner Farms, which started out as a small family owned business, is now a producer of several varieties of gourmet fruit drizzle toppings. The International Marketing Program at MDARD helped the company access the Food Export programs and services, including the Midwest Buyers Mission. Herkner Farms has also taken advantage of the Food Export Online Product Catalog in 2016 and 2017, and will attend a Food Service Buyers Mission later in 2017.

Food Export uses funding from the Market Access Program (MAP) to help America's small businesses increase their exports of food and agricultural products. As these exports increase, these small businesses are creating jobs and improving the strength and stability of our agricultural economy. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are non-profit organizations that work in collaboration with their member state departments of agriculture and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. They offer a wide range of programs and services that help boost America's agricultural exports.



For more information on the International Marketing Program please visit www.michigan.gov/agexport or for more information about Food Export Midwest please visit www.foodexport.org.