



**Washington Red Raspberry Commission**  
**Strategic Plan**  
**A Roadmap for FY 2021-2031**



## BACKGROUND

The Washington Red Raspberry Commission (WRRC) was established in 1976 to promote the general welfare of the state and for the purpose of maintaining existing markets or creating new or larger local, domestic, and foreign markets; increase production efficiency; ensure a fair regulatory environment; or increase per capita consumption of red raspberries grown in Washington state.

The Washington red raspberry industry is composed of approximately 80 growers and more than a dozen processors. Many processors are also growers. The industry has been steadily decreasing in number of growers over the past 40 years but acreage in raspberry production has been stable at approximately 9,000 acres. As an industry that has been handed down from generation to generation, all of the Washington red raspberry farms are family operated. The men and women who grow Washington red raspberries pour their passion and hard work into cultivating the highest quality berries to feed their families and families around the country.

In 2013, the WRRC guided establishment of the National Processed Raspberry Council (NPRC) to maintain and expand existing markets and develop new markets for processed raspberry products. In 2019, the NPRC was disbanded and the emphasis for market development shifted to promotion of Washington grown raspberries.

Over the course of its six-plus years in operation, the NPRC's marketing program drove awareness across both consumer, trade, and health professional audiences and implemented many forward-thinking programs such as harvest tours, innovation workshops, media workshops, ambassador networks, partnership with YouTube star Blippi, storytelling video content, and the development of numerous communications assets. Over the course of the NPRC's existence, it saw an increase in total social media followers by more than 3650% and garnered more than 680,000,000 consumer media impressions and more than 3,000,000 trade media impressions. In addition to robust marketing efforts, the NPRC also funded numerous health and nutrition research studies with top-tier researchers investigating the potential impact of red raspberries on cardiometabolic health, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cognitive health, and weight management.

After the NPRC was disbanded, the WRRC assumed control of the NPRC's assets—website, social media accounts, print and digital content, photography, recipes, etc. Equipped with new assets and amid a global pandemic, the WRRC Board of Directors recognized the importance of analyzing its current environment and looking ahead strategically to ensure the strength of its industry for generations to come.

The WRRC Strategic Planning Committee led a comprehensive process that included a deep dive into the current environment, industry input, a SWOT analysis, and multiple strategic planning sessions to develop this comprehensive strategic plan.





## SWOT ANALYSIS

The following SWOT analysis illustrates the major challenges and opportunities facing the Washington red raspberry industry.

# S

### STRENGTHS

- Machine harvesting
- Labor practices
- Berry quality
- Food safety
- Grower collaboration
- Privatized plant breeding research (new cultivars)
- Health benefits research
- Sustainability
- WSU relationship
- Market share of U.S. frozen raspberries
- Generational farm stories
- Beautiful countryside/ farms
- Trade marketing
- Social media

# W

### WEAKNESSES

- Washington-only fruit (identified as being from Washington) across pack formats
- Cost of producing raspberries in Washington
- Exporting to foreign markets
- Pricing
- Consistent volume
- Ability to fund all priorities to ensure impact
- Grower/processor engagement with WRRRC

# O

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Future Leadership within the Washington Red Raspberry industry
- Grower collaboration
- Sustainability
- Increased demand
- Product innovation (dehydrofrozen raspberry, crumbles, packaging innovation)
- Consumer marketing

# T

### THREATS

- Imports
- Labor laws
- Water rights
- Increasing costs of production
- Lack of new entrants into the industry
- Inability to meet demand or fulfill requests
- Comingling with foreign fruit while promoting Washington
- Ability to meet foreign MRL requirements



## OVERVIEW

The purpose of this strategic plan is to establish clear goals, objectives and strategies to help the Washington Red Raspberry Commission achieve its mission and work toward its vision over the next 10 years. The Commission will formally evaluate its progress against this plan annually, and in 2026, the organization will conduct a landscape analysis to determine if a major planning process is needed again at that time.

## VISION

*Bring the integrity and passion of Washington red raspberry growers to people around the world.*

## MISSION

*To create a positive future for Washington red raspberry growers through research, marketing and advocacy.*

## CORE VALUES

- » Integrity
- » Quality
- » Family
- » Collaboration
- » Passion
- » Dedication
- » Responsibility

## OBJECTIVES

The WRRRC has set clear objectives for the industry. The following objectives will be achieved through a variety of strategies that leverage marketing, advocacy and research tactics:

- » Increase awareness, value perception and demand for Washington red raspberries
- » Maintain or increase Washington red raspberry production and distribution
- » Mitigate regulatory burdens on Washington red raspberry farmers
- » Maintain high standards for food safety, labor practices and environmental stewardship
- » Ensure imports adhere to domestic food safety, fair trade and production standards
- » Increase direct grower participation and engagement with the WRRRC
- » Increase the strength and economic viability of the Washington red raspberry industry by providing growers with better information and tools for decision-making



## STRATEGIC APPROACH


The WRRC will take a comprehensive and multi-layered approach to create a positive future for Washington red raspberry growers. The following strategies will be leveraged as appropriate across

- » Empower industry with marketing tools and resources
- » Educate key decision makers on the benefits and advantages of Washington Red Raspberries and the unique Washington industry story
- » Cultivate strategic partnerships, including public-private, to support objectives
- » Develop new Washington-only products, packaging, etc. to fill unmet market needs
- » Pursue legal approaches to meet key objectives when necessary
- » Monitor and respond to issues/opportunities
- » Cultivate leaders and champions for WRRC


The following frameworks demonstrate how these strategies can be leveraged across the three areas of focus for WRRC:

### Marketing Framework


The following framework will guide marketing and communications plans over the next 10 years and illustrates the need for close coordination with advocacy activities, given overlapping approaches. Audience research at any time throughout the next 10 years may require adjustments to this approach.




MISSION




OBJECTIVES



AUDIENCES



STRATEGIES



TACTICS

To create a positive future for Washington red raspberry growers through research, marketing and advocacy.

Increase awareness, value perception and demand for Washington red raspberries

Maintain or increase Washington red raspberry production and distribution

Mitigate regulatory burdens on Washington red raspberry farmers

Increase direct grower participation and engagement with the WRRC

Increase the strength and economic viability of the Washington red raspberry industry by providing growers with better information and tools for decision-making

Consumers, baking professionals, school foodservice, other foodservice professionals, manufacturers, retailers, brokers/distributors, growers/processors, elected officials (local, state, federal)

Empower Industry with Marketing Tools & Resources

- Health research
- Materials development
- Issues management
- Engage/educate industry

Educate Decision Makers

- Consumer/trade media outreach
- Innovation/experiential events
- Stakeholder engagement
- Direct outreach

Develop Strategic Partnerships

- Political
- Regulatory
- Other commodity boards
- Academia
- Like-minded organizations

Research & Development






- Fund health research studies
- Develop new products (formats, pack-styles, etc.)
- Market data and consumer research





## Research Framework

The following provides a framework for decision-making when it comes to funding research projects for the next 5-10 years. Priorities will be evaluated annually and may change depending upon the needs of the industry. While the WRRRC may fund academia that is responsive to the interests of the raspberry industry, the following framework sets forward the priorities that are most important to the WRRRC research program. The WRRRC will collaborate proactively with researchers to prioritize industry needs and will seek grant funding to support priorities.

 <b>MISSION</b>	<b>To create a positive future for Washington red raspberry growers through research, marketing and advocacy.</b>			
 <b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Increase awareness, value perception and demand for Washington red raspberries	Maintain or increase Washington red raspberry production and distribution	Maintain high standards for food safety, labor practices and environmental stewardship	Increase the strength and economic viability of the Washington red raspberry industry by providing growers with better information and tools for decision-making
 <b>AUDIENCES</b>	<i>Growers/processors, universities, researchers, like-minded organizations/industries</i>			
 <b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>Develop new cultivars</b>	<b>Crop protection challenges:</b> <i>Insects, Diseases, and Weeds</i>	<b>Cultural calibrations</b>	<b>Develop labor saving practices</b>
 <b>PRIORITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer bearing, winter hardy</li> <li>• High yielding</li> <li>• Machine-harvestable</li> <li>• Disease resistant</li> <li>• Virus resistant</li> <li>• Superior quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit rot</li> <li>• Foliar and cane diseases</li> <li>• Spotted Wing Drosophila</li> <li>• Mite management</li> <li>• Weevils</li> <li>• Weed control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrient needs</li> <li>• Irrigation</li> <li>• Soil management</li> <li>• Alternative growing systems</li> <li>• Pollinator protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase pruning efficiency</li> <li>• Leverage public-private technology partnerships</li> <li>• Mechanizing for cost reduction</li> </ul>



## Advocacy Framework

Advocacy for the evolving needs of raspberry farmers is a key focus area for the WRRRC. Supporting programs that help educate decision-makers at the local, state and federal level about the needs of the Washington red raspberry industry on the local, state, and national economy leads to public policies that benefit rather than inhibit the sustainability of growers. The following framework will guide advocacy work and illustrates the need for close coordination with marketing activities, given overlapping approaches.

 MISSION   OBJECTIVES   AUDIENCES   STRATEGIES   TACTICS	<b>To create a positive future for Washington red raspberry growers through research, marketing and advocacy.</b>				
	Increase awareness, value perception and demand for Washington red raspberries	Mitigate regulatory burdens on Washington red raspberry farmers	Ensure imports adhere to domestic food safety, fair trade and production standards	Maintain high standards for food safety, labor practices and environmental stewardship	Increase direct grower participation and engagement with the WRRRC
	<i>Growers/processors, elected officials, like-minded organizations/industries, regulatory agencies</i>				
	Pursue legal/regulatory action	Educate Decision Makers	Develop Strategic Partnerships	Monitor/respond to issues	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine and leverage legal options with regard to unfair import practices</li> <li>Seek and manage international maximum residues levels (MRLs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer/trade media outreach</li> <li>Educational events</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>Direct outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political</li> <li>Regulatory</li> <li>Other commodity boards</li> <li>Academia</li> <li>Like-minded organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer/trade media outreach</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>Direct outreach</li> </ul>	



## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

To maintain accountability and understand progress over time, the WRRRC has set key performance indicators for each of its objectives that will be evaluated annually. The WRRRC has set these indicators as measures of success within a given timeframe and assigned responsibility to key committees who will oversee progress on these metrics and report to the Board quarterly.

### *Increase awareness, value perception and demand for Washington red raspberries*

1. Secure a minimum of four consumer news stories in the Pacific Northwest each year, with Washington red raspberry key messages mentioned in 90% of stories
2. Increase social media engagement (comments, likes or followers) by 10% each year
3. Garner a minimum of 6 unique trade media stories annually; with Washington red raspberry key messages mentioned in 90% of stories
4. Increase baking professional awareness through survey – baseline Year 1: increase by 25% by 2031
5. Establish one new international market by 2031
6. Facilitate development of at least 2 new Washington Raspberry pack sizes, packaging types, or raspberry formats every 5 years
7. Facilitate development of 2 new consumer packaged goods (CPG) or foodservice products with partners (ex. Rubicon) every 5 years

### *Maintain or increase Washington red raspberry production and distribution*

1. Establish one new international market by 2031
2. Facilitate development of at least 2 new Washington Raspberry pack sizes, packaging types, or raspberry formats every 5 years
3. Facilitate development of 2 new consumer packaged goods (CPG) or foodservice products with partners (ex. Rubicon) every 5 years
4. Work through the US delegation to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) to nominate needed raspberry maximum residues level (MRL) priorities to the CCPR schedule of pesticide reviews for new uses or active ingredients
5. Establish 2-3 new distribution lines for Washington red raspberries in foodservice

### *Mitigate regulatory burdens on Washington red raspberry farmers*

1. Conduct at least one educational opportunity for local, state and federal elected officials each year
2. Work through the US delegation to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) to nominate needed raspberry maximum residues level (MRL) priorities to the CCPR schedule of pesticide reviews for new uses or active ingredients

### *Maintain high standards for food safety, labor practices and environmental stewardship*

1. All growers and processors meet or exceed local, state and federal food safety requirements
2. All growers and processors adhere to and be known as a leader in local, state and federal labor practices
3. Conduct a sustainability audit to evaluate environmental stewardship
4. Support farmer led organizations (i.e. Ag Water Board, Family Farmers, Skagitonians, etc.) in their efforts to lead farmers in environmental responsibility





***Ensure imports adhere to domestic food safety, fair trade and production standards***

1. Obtain and evaluate findings from Section 332 Factfinding Investigation
2. Advocate for consistent monitoring of imported berries and berry products to ensure food safety standards are fully adhered to
3. Cooperate with the International Raspberry Organization to provide all growers the best safety and quality information
4. Other measures determined by legal counsel

***Increase direct grower participation and engagement with the WRRC***

1. Add one first-time committee member to each committee or Board of Directors annually
2. Establish a baseline for industry newsletter readership of 25%
3. Increase ways in which the organization engages with industry members by establishing at least one additional communications opportunity for growers (such as a town hall) that is held annually in addition to the annual meeting at the Small Fruit Conference
4. Maintain a rating of satisfactory or higher among 85% of growers/processors annually

***Increase the strength and economic viability of the Washington red raspberry industry by providing growers with better information and tools for decision-making***

1. Facilitate development of at least 2 new Washington Raspberry pack sizes, packaging types, or raspberry formats every 5 years
2. Facilitate development of 2 new consumer packaged goods (CPG) or foodservice products with partners (ex. Rubicon) every 5 years
3. Establish 2-3 new distribution lines for Washington red raspberries in foodservice
4. Obtain product registration for one new, effective crop protection material every two years with the EPA to address most pressing challenges for production
5. Encourage the establishment of one four-acre block of a public variety every two years for industry evaluation
6. Secure grant funding annually to support at least one project within the highest priority research issues
7. Establish a baseline satisfaction rating with growers regarding production research investments

