

# THE SPOTLIGHT

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## HANNA INTERNATIONAL SALES INC.

*by John Sears*

The popularity of BC grown cherries has exploded in recent years.

Starting in mid-June in the southern Osoyoos region, and lasting until September as harvesting moves northward, Okanagan cherries have improved in quality so much that the industry can now boast they are among the best, and most in-demand, in the world.

“BC cherry growers have done an outstanding job of replacing older, softer varieties like Lamberts and Bings with varieties such as Lapin’s, Sweethearts and Staccatos that have a much longer shelf life,” claims Steve Snaychuk, owner of Hanna International Sales Inc, specialist in Okanagan cherries. “These new varieties have a taste, flavour and crunch that consumers simply can’t get enough of.”

Continued Snaychuk, “Credit for the improvement in this popular summertime commodity doesn’t rest just with the growers; modern methods of hydro cooling, grading and packaging have all contributed to the huge increase in the durability of BC cherries.”

Mr. Snaychuk began his career in the produce industry with BC Tree Fruits in 1986, quickly rising to branch manager in Winnipeg and then Vancouver, before returning to corporate duties in the Kelowna head office where he focused on the procurement and distribution of southern Okanagan cherries and other fruits.

Seizing upon the demand by local growers for a hands-on distributor of their fragile product, Snaychuk founded Hanna International Sales Inc. in 2006. His knowledge, expertise and reliable reputation quickly led to expansion. Heidi Cleator joined the sales desk in 2012 and now Hanna International serves customers across Canada, and ships to foreign markets in Asia and the USA.

Hanna International has also expanded into other tree fruit commodities, such as peaches, apples and pears, many of which the company now ships year-round. The addition of popular ground crops including tomatoes, peppers and hot house cucumbers keep Steve and Heidi especially busy during the sunny months of summer.

For Snaychuk, becoming one of BC’s major fruit suppliers has had its drawback, though. His second favourite pastime - golf - being the casualty

“The cherry deal is very demanding,” admits BC’s foremost cherry guy. “I’m either in the orchards or at packing houses all summer long, and never on the golf course.”

He concluded, “Oh, well. Maybe when I retire...”

Judging by his success as a purveyor of top quality Okanagan produce, retirement will be a long time coming for this dedicated entrepreneur.

Mr. Snaychuk advises he’ll have crop updates and availability information for all Okanagan-grown fruits and vegetables by mid-May.

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