



New Mexico Department of Agriculture

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New Mexico Agricultural Innovation and Trade Mission to Italy set for May 19-26

Agriculturists go abroad to learn more about international markets

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LAS CRUCES, N.M. – Did you know that Italy has the eighth largest economy in the world and the third largest economy in the European Union, with a GDP estimated at \$2 trillion and a per capita GDP of over \$34 million in 2022? Italy is a major importer of ingredients such as tree nuts and spices, as well as specialty foods and beverages, giving New Mexico agricultural producers the opportunity to export products like pecans, chile and craft beer.

Most Italian farms are small – 11 hectares (27 acres) on average – and produce quality regional specialties. The northern part of the country produces meat and dairy products, grain and soybeans, while the southern part of the country produces fruits, vegetables, olive oil, wine and durum wheat (pasta wheat). To learn more about Italy’s agricultural trade operations, policies and latest innovations in the industry, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture has organized the 2024 Agricultural Innovation and International Trade Mission to Italy.

The mission is taking off May 19 and returns May 26. Participants will fly into Rome, the capital of Italy, then explore various geographic regions. Participants will venture through several tours and research facilities that specialize in agricultural sustainability, technology and land usage methods.

New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte said the trip will open more doors for New Mexico agriculturists and could grow a market for New Mexico agriculture.

“This mission will provide New Mexico producers with a unique opportunity to build relationships in Italy while gaining valuable perspectives on shared challenges impacting agriculture,” said Witte. “Italy is a net agricultural importer of raw materials and ingredients, which makes it a great export market.”

With 27 participants, this trip will provide an opportunity to bring back knowledge of the international market to various communities throughout the state. The New Mexico Agricultural Leadership program was also invited to join the trip, as the program is committed to developing knowledgeable, multicultural leaders within the food, agriculture and natural resource industries of New Mexico. Tina Wilson, Program Specialist Senior and Coordinator for the New Mexico Agriculture Leadership Program, said she is most excited to see what opportunities this trip will not only bring to the program but to the New Mexico market.

“The New Mexico Agricultural Innovation and Trade Mission to Italy is an important step in creating new relationships and expanding into new markets for New Mexico producers,” said Wilson. “Trip participants will not only expand export opportunities but will also gain a deeper understanding of agriculture outside of the United States. These trips provide the opportunity to observe new and innovative procedures that can be applied to farms and ranches in New Mexico.”

This mission is expected to create international relationships and generate a deeper understanding of large population agriculture, as Italy encompasses more than 116,300 square miles and boasts a population of nearly 60 million. Italy is the tenth-largest country by land on the European continent and the third-most populous member state of the European Union. In comparison, New Mexico has a total area of 121,967 square miles and a population of 2.12 million.

For more information regarding the mission, please email NMDA Marketing Specialist Juan Sanchez at jsanchez@nmda.nmsu.edu.

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Cutline: One of the largest agricultural commodities in New Mexico is chile. New Mexico is the No. 1 chile-producing state in the nation. Twenty-seven New Mexicans will participate in the 2024 Agricultural Innovation and International Trade Mission to Italy May 19-26, which is expected to create more export opportunities for New Mexico products like chile. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)



Cutline: The craft beer industry in New Mexico has grown in recent years. Twenty-seven New Mexicans will participate in the 2024 Agricultural Innovation and International Trade Mission to Italy May 19-26, which is expected to create more export opportunities for New Mexico products like craft beer. (Photo courtesy of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture)



Pecans are a large export product for New Mexico. In 2023, the state produced 100 million pounds of pecans. Twenty-seven New Mexicans will participate in the 2024 Agricultural Innovation and International Trade Mission to Italy May 19-26, which is expected to create more opportunities for New Mexico products like pecans. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)