Global Blueberry News and Production Links August 2015

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NABC and USHBC 2015 Fall Meeting

October 7-9 Monte Carlo Resort, Las Vegas

Monte Carlo Resort
3770 Las Vegas Blvd.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109
Website: www.montecarlo.com
Reservation phone: 800-311-8999

To make your room reservation online, go here. Reserve your hotel room directly with the Monte Carlo Resort no later than Tuesday, September 8, 2015. The group room rate is $80/night plus $20 daily resort fee plus current taxes. Note: The room rate goes up to $155/night+ on Friday, 10/9/15. It is important to identify your affiliation with group code XNABC15. Rates cannot be changed at check-in or check-out for guests who fail to identify their affiliation at the time the reservation is made. For flight information go here.
US/BC Crop Reports

Each month I request crop information from industry people in the various regions. If some regions are not included below it's because no recent (within the last week) updates were received.—T. Peerbolt, Bluespaper editor

- **Oregon:** (August 23) Still a little late season harvesting of Elliott and Aurora going on although overall numbers are pretty low. The season was early, hot, dry and concentrated. Decent crop although, like Washington, Oregon's overall crop numbers will be lower than it would if we'd had a more 'normal' weather year.

- **Washington State:** (August 23) Eastern Washington blueberry harvest is essentially over. Western Washington is finishing up picks of the late varieties. Overall Washington blueberry production is expected to be greater than in 2014 but less than what was originally projected for 2015. Prolonged extremely hot weather in eastern Washington and prolonged hot temperatures and lack of rainfall contributed to a state wide reduction in production over what was expected.

- **British Columbia:** (August 23) Elliott and Aurora are being harvested with good quality. SWD adult catches are high but growers are maintaining control. Continues to be dry as a bone.

U.S. Cold Storage Update

**Holdings**
At the end of July 236.6 million lbs. of frozen blueberries were reported in cold storage compared to 171.1 million at the end of July in 2014.

**Movement**
Reported holdings increased 103.8 million lbs. in July. The 2014 comparable figure was 70.0 million lbs.

**Bottom line (opinion):**
- Just a huge increase in cold storage holdings as the concentrated 2015 harvest season came in.
- All of us in the industry have our work cut out for us developing markets and increasing
The North American Blueberry Council (NABC) sends out detailed monthly cold storage reports by email to its members. For further information, please send an email to info@nabcblues.org

**In The News**

**Grower Resources**

- Blueberries: [Mummy Berry Management in the Pacific Northwest](https://oregonstate.edu) (Oregon State Extension)
- Guiding strip-tillers to success with precision (8/10, Ag Professional)
- Suspect PPO-resistant pigweed fields showing up everywhere (8/7, Ag Professional)

**Magazine/ website compilations**

- The Packer: blueberries
- Growing Produce: recent berry articles.
- Andnowyouknow.com: blueberries.
- Fruittnet-Eurofruit: recent berry articles.
- Fresh Fruit Portal: blueberries.

**Food Safety**

- Temperature control: A critical food safety element (8/10, Food Safety News)

**Research**

- SWD: The risk from non-crop plants near to cultivated commercial ones (7/27, Fresh Plaza)
- N.C. State researchers look at mechanical blueberry harvester (7/13, SE Farm Press)

**Pollinators**

*Good flowers & bad flowers…*

- WSU bee researcher touts flower power (8/9, Capital Press)
- Flowers can endanger bees, study finds (8/7, Ag Professional)
**USHBC**

- Blueberry group celebrates milestone (8/17, The Packer)
- How New Jersey tamed the wild blueberry for global production (8/4, NPR article & video)
  Nice story on the commercial blueberry’s origin.

**Markets**

- Berry Demand is Strong but Growers not on Easy Street (7/21, Street Insider)
- Berry producers keep pace despite drought, summer heat (8/3, Capital Press)

**Technology**

- Magic Water: Electrolyzed Water is Making Waves in Storage and Packing House Sanitation (8/3, Good Fruit Grower)
- Agriculture expected to make up 80% of market for drones in the near future (7/25, Star Tribune)
- Precision Ag insights: Drones on demand may be next destination for UAV’s in agriculture (8/10, Ag Professional)

**North America**

- Michigan: Cold spares late-season Michigan blueberries (7/30, The Packer)
- New York State: Blueberry production up (7/29, the Packer)

**International**

- Germany: “Demand for blueberries extremely high” (8/21)
- Poland: Strong demand offsets increased competition for Polish blueberry shippers (8/7, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- United Kingdom: Berry Gardens managing director reports soft fruit market could hit 1 billion pounds (currency not weight) this year (7/8, Horticulture Week)

**Upcoming Events**

- September 7-9 — 5th Annual International Blueberry Organization Summit — Coffs Harbor, Australia. Go here for meeting information.
- October 7, 8, and 9 — USHBC/NABC meetings in Las Vegas at the Monte Carlo Resort & Casino. See above for information.
October 13-15 — Sixth Biannual Berry Health Benefits Symposium, Madison, Wisconsin. For more information on the Berry Health Benefits Symposium please visit the conference website www.berryhealth.org

Health Research News

Did you know?

Although highbush blueberries have been around for 100 years, it’s only been in the past 15 years that interest in the health benefits of blueberries has soared. In 1998, Dr. Ron Prior and others (1), including USHBC Research Committee member Dr. Mike Mainland, published a paper with information on the antioxidant activity of a variety of Vaccinium species and documented that blueberries were among the highest in antioxidant activity. That helped create an interest and emphasis on the antioxidant activity of blueberries.

However, other scientists, such as Dr. Jim Joseph, began to study the effects of a blueberry supplemented diet in rodents and found an improvement in cognitive function (2,3). Research on the health benefits of highbush blueberries continued to increase over the past 15 years and expanded to the effects on cardiovascular health (4,5), insulin response (6-8) and cancer (9-11). Although antioxidant activity is an important feature of blueberries and contributes to the scientific interest, it was just the beginning of a larger “health story”.

Looking at the number of research papers on blueberries listed in the National Library of Medicine database as an indicator of scientific interest in blueberries, the number has increased from around 20 papers 15 years ago, when USHBC was formed, to around 175 papers in 2014.

It’s difficult to predict what the next 100 years of health research on blueberries will discover in light of the availability of new advanced scientific techniques and knowledge, but the USHBC Research Committee plans to continue to fund studies that support existing knowledge on the health benefits of blueberries as well as explore new areas such as the effect of blueberries on gut bacteria.

REFERENCES:


packers with requests for pricing which ends abruptly after the price is given.

- Shippers are facing all sorts of difficulties at the ports and receive request after request for more and more documentation.
- Steep duties are piled on the prices of processed blueberries.

Still we believe there is a tremendous untapped market for frozen blueberries in China. We just need to figure out the companies, channels and the process to approach this complex value-chain

USHBC has received a grant from the USDA-FAS for a feasibility study on the Chinese food industry. This grant program is in a category called the: Emerging Markets Program (EMP) which is designed to help US companies and industries approach markets with lower than $17,000 per capita income. (We are also conducting EMP programs in Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia.). We are just getting started, but with our decades of work in the country we have a good running start!

We are identifying and contracting food industry experts in the different regions of China. this is a huge country and we are focusing on the areas with food manufacturing including Guangdong, Fujien, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Beijing and others. These experts know the inside scoop on the food business.

Companies and channel partners are being identified and contacted. A chart of the value-chain is being crafted. This is extremely important to our industry as so many companies come and go. We also want to know the background -- are they state, military, private, foreign joint ventures. Most important --can they do business!

We are validating information from the USA side where in the process of contact we are learning of requirements and fielding technical questions and homing in on specifics.

A report will be crafted at the end, but in the mean time, we will be delivering real time, practical intelligence to the US packers and shippers of frozen blueberries.

Stay tuned for updates on the program, and we will also report at the next USHBC meeting in Las Vegas in October!

Marketing News

Grower Spotlight: An Interview with Karen Avinelis, Thomas Creek Farms

Karen Avinelis is the President/R&D Director of Thomas Creek Farms, located in Porterville, Calif. Below, she details the benefits of being a member of the Blueberry Council.

Q: Would you encourage your peers to lean on the USHBC as a marketing resource? If so, how would you
describe the value/benefit to them?

A: We would encourage every blueberry grower, large, medium or small in scope, to take advantage of the services and expertise that the USHBC brings to our industry. Get involved, attend the meetings in the spring and fall, network with the growers and their families, get connected in all aspects and anticipate the benefits that await your collaboration! Once connected to this body of growers and the USHBC, the blueberry industry from a local grower perspective becomes globally collaborative quickly. Before you know it you will be off to visit other growers across the country and the world of blueberries will never be the same again.

Blueberries Fuel Athletes During Tennis U.S. Open

The U.S. Open is back this fall, and a star player this season is the blueberry. Athletes will be fueling up with little blue dynamos, which will be featured in dishes at the U.S. Open Athlete’s Lounge.

For three weeks, fresh and dried blueberries will be a go-to in the salad station and grab-and-go snack area, and in savory dishes like Blueberry Almond Orzo Pilaf and Barbecue Chicken Breast with Blueberry Balsamic Barbecue Sauce. Frozen blueberries will be on the menu at the Smoothie and Juice Bar, where athletes can order “FIT Smoothies” and other refreshing beverages.

While enjoying the taste and health benefits of blueberries, athletes will learn about nutritional value and history through eye-catching signage that will be on display throughout the lounge.

Free Cupcakes Ease the Blues

To kick off a year of Centennial celebrations, the Blueberry Council said #HappyBdayBlueberries with a cupcake truck takeover in partnership with the popular Curbside Cupcakes in Washington, D.C. More than 700 blueberry fans lined up to celebrate with free cupcakes, choosing from Blueberry Cobbler, Blueberry Lemonade and It Takes Blue to Mango flavors.
This event, which aligned with the growing trend of consumers’ love of food trucks, helped educate fans about the Centennial year and enabled the Council to connect one-on-one with hundreds of consumers, who were encouraged to post on social media about their experience using #HappyBdayBlueberries.

Fans were eager to share their love for blueberries, and were encouraged to continue the celebration by sharing more blueberry-infused photos with their friends and family throughout the month of July. The event was rewarding for Curbside Cupcakes as well, which has continued to use the flavors developed for the event, after seeing fans line up around the block to try these unique and delicious combinations.

You can download the USHBC’s web app to your cell phone’s home screen for easy access to blueberry promotion news!

Just go to:  
Ridethebluewave.com

The USHBC Bluespaper is compiled and reported by Tom Peerbolt and published by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council; 1847 Iron Point Road, Suite 100; Folsom, California 95630. Phone (916) 983-0111; Fax (916) 983-9022; Web Site: www.blueberry.org, or www.littlebluedynamos.com.

The USHBC has adopted a diversity outreach plan to attempt to achieve a diverse representation on the Council. USHBC programs and meetings are open to all individuals. The USHBC prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, parental status and marital or family status. The USHBC fully complies with any and all applicable Federal, State, and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances and regulations, including, but not limited
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