Global Blueberry News and Production Links
September 2015

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U.S. Cold Storage Update

Holdings: At the end of August 273.6 million lbs. of frozen blueberries were reported in cold storage compared to 269.5 million at the end of August in 2014.

Movement: Reported holdings increased 37.3 million lbs. in August. The 2014 comparable figure was 97.9 million lbs.

Bottom line (opinion):

- Differences between the 2014 and 2015 harvest timings is the most likely factor explaining the cold storage supply figures above.
- 2015’s crop was much earlier so the July storage figure jumped much more than in 2014.
- The August 2014 increase is much larger than this year’s since that crop came in later.
- So they balance out. Leaving us pretty close last year’s figure at the end of August.
- Production was down in 2015 due to many weather factors. Assuming these won’t be repeated in 2016, next year’s crop is very likely to show a sizable increase.
- We need to continue aggressively developing new markets and increasing demand in established markets.

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

Upcoming Events

- **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
- **December 2-4** — Washington Small Fruit Conference, NW Washington Fairgrounds, Lynden, WA. Go here for more information and to register.
- **January 25** — Oregon Blueberry Conference. 8am-7pm, Red Lion on the River, Portland. Email jenny@ostlund.com for more information and/or to become a sponsor.

Health Research News

**Did You Know?**

In addition to providing funds for selected research proposals, the USHBC Health Research Committee also helps promote research into the health benefits of blueberries by providing freeze dried highbush blueberry powder for some studies that are not directly funded by the USHBC. This helps stretch our research dollars and increase the number of studies using highbush blueberries. The powder is simply whole blueberries that have had the water removed by freeze drying which...
avoids the nutrient loss that may occur with heated drying. Once the water is removed, the berries are milled to a powder and stored. The powder represents the whole berry, not an extract, so that the benefits we may see in a research study can reflect the benefits of eating whole fresh or frozen highbush blueberries.

Occasionally a researcher will be interested in studying the health benefits of blueberries and already has funding for the project, but needs a source of blueberries that is a consistent product that can be easily consumed and used throughout a long study. If the objectives of the study fit within the mission of the Council, the Research Committee may decide to provide the powder.

For example, Dr. Carrie Elks at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge Louisiana requested powder for an animal study that she was conducting in which she wanted to study the effect of feeding blueberries to postmenopausal mice. The risk of developing Metabolic Syndrome, an obesity-related condition associated with cardiovascular disease and diabetes, is increased with menopause. Using our powder she found that when postmenopausal mice were fed a high fat diet and became obese, they also had impaired glucose tolerance, higher serum triglycerides and fatty livers. However, although the postmenopausal mice which were fed our blueberry powder along with the high fat diet also became obese, they had better glucose tolerance, lower triglycerides and less fatty livers.

Additional research in humans is needed in order to know if these effects would also occur in postmenopausal women. Perhaps in the future our powder will be used in a human study that will investigate this question.

For more information on this article and others, visit, www.blueberrycouncil.org/health-professionals/health-research/


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**Market Tech/Export Update**

**By Thomas Payne**

**Blueberries for ASEAN**

We are always talking about US Blueberry promotions to the "heavyweight" BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). We are now looking to a promising market in the "welterweight class" Southeast Asia. The ASEAN countries: Association of Southeast Asian Nations. They consist of: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Singapore is a very promising
market for fresh blueberries. Last year its population consumed more than 650,000 kgs of fresh blueberries (about 1.4 million lbs). This is a substantial amount for a country with just 6.5 million people! Singaporeans appreciate good food and are turning on to blueberries!

The Philippines are an emerging market for processed blueberries. This USA-friendly country of 98 million consumed more than 575,000 kg of frozen and dried blueberries. (1.2 million lbs.) Many of the berries went into the food industry, which includes baking, dairy, and snack foods.

Thailand also offers a food industry market. Blueberry is a popular ice cream flavor.

USHBC has been working in the ASEAN markets for the past decade, mainly in the food industry with exhibitions and technical assistance. In the coming year we will conduct retail promotions for fresh blueberries in Singapore and perhaps in the Philippines and Vietnam where we are working on market access.

Demand Determinants:

- Association of blueberries with health and beauty.
- Dried blueberry consumption during Ramadan in Islamic countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.
- Rise of service industry culture such as call centers and high tech parks which boosting middle class spending.
- Regional food industries in countries such as Indonesia.

Watch this promising new market for US blueberries!

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Marketing News

The Blueberry Council is heading to FNCE!

Every year, hundreds of dietitians and health professionals convene at the Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE). The Blueberry Council is heading to the event to talk blueberries and their health benefits with attendees this year. The USHBC’s booth will feature:

- A “Little Changes” giveaway contest
- “Small Steps, Big Rewards” Fitbit contest
- Samples of the Councils’ Blueberry Farro and
Blueberry Cucumber Salad recipes

- Take away blueberry information for attendees

Blueberries tend to be a main attraction, so we’re sure to have a successful visit.

The six-day blueberry pilot program.

The Blueberry Council, General Mills and grocery chain Publix partnered on a pilot program to promote blueberries and Cheerios via Publix’s Fresh Savings platform. From June 4-10, Publix shoppers at all 1,075 locations were offered $2 off a box of Cheerios when they purchased two pints of blueberries. Overall, the six-day program led to:

- 9,300+ coupon redemptions
- Nearly 19,000 pints of blueberries sold
- 24.6 million positive impressions (earned + paid)
- 25,000+ consumer interactions via digital platforms (web, email, social)

Working with a national brand provided additional exposure for blueberries and drove demand in a new way. The Council will continue to create and seek opportunities to get blueberries off the shelves and into the mouths of more consumers!

From the U.S. Open to hundreds of corporate cafés, blueberries have been enjoyed on menus across the country!

To kick-off the centennial year of the cultivation of blueberries, the Blueberry Council made sure blueberries were anywhere and everywhere they could be! The Council partnered with Restaurant Associates to get a series of blueberry recipes and Centennial-themed banners, posters and table tents in highly-trafficked areas of the Museum of American History’s “Stars and Stripes Café” and 125 corporate cafés, including Capital One, Citibank, Condast, Hearst, JP Morgan Chase, The New York Times and Viacom.

Blueberries were also found fueling athletes at the tennis U.S. Open. While enjoying the taste and health benefits of blueberries in the U.S. Open Athlete’s Lounge, players learned about their nutritional value and history through eye-catchign signage that was on display throughout the lounge. The U.S. Open results are still being finalized, but Restaurant Associates expects 2,500
lbs. of fresh and frozen blueberries were consumed during the tournament.

Fast Food Chains on the Hunt for Fresh

Fast food giant Wendy's recently disclosed that it took three years and a search involving more than 30 growers to obtain enough blackberries for a new salad offering. But Wendy's isn't the only "fast-casual" chain in search of fresh produce for menu offerings. Many restaurants are adding fresh and healthier menu items, as consumers continually say that adding more fresh produce to their diet is important.

As fast food and "fast casual" restaurants scramble to offer healthier, fresher items, they are faced with a major problem: sourcing produce. As big brands continue to create menu items with fresh produce, the Blueberry Council will be looking out for opportunities to get blueberries on the menu.

In The News

Magazine/ website compilations

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

Food Safety

- DNA testing for food could make listeria outbreaks a thing of the past (9/16, Eater)

Pest Management

- What to do about SWD infested fruit? (9/15, Fruit Grower News)

Organics

- Washington's organic blueberries growing more profitable (9/18, Fruit Grower News)
- USDA releases organic survey (9/18, The Packer)
- Organic farm sales surge 72% from 2008 (9/17, Agri-Pulse)

Technology

- Using technology to get 'smarter' about accessing food information (9/17, The Hill)
Maine (wild blueberries): Machines take over Maine’s blueberry industry, hundreds of migrants lose their work (9/8, Fox News Latino)

- Fresh ideas for cold storage (9/21, Packaging News)

**North America**

- Florida: Port Manatee gets federal approval for pilot fruit import program (9/14, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Maine wild blueberry harvest slightly below average in 2015 (9/19, Portland Press Herald)
- History of blueberry growing in North Carolina 4 minute video by the North Carolina Blueberry Council.
- Florida: Scientists zero in on genetic traits for best blueberry taste (9/21, Lab Manager News)

**South America**

- Chile: Chile Assesses damage after powerful earthquake (9/17, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Chile: Chilean earthquake spares fruit (9/17, The Packer)
- Peru: Peru cuts in to Argentina’s blueberry market (9/18, The Packer)
- Peru: Canada greenlights Peruvian blueberry imports (9/8, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Argentina: Hail hits Argentine blueberry region (9/21, Fresh Fruit Portal)

**Europe**

- England: British berries enjoy their juiciest season yet (9/11, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Germany: Direct marketing an ‘insurance to survive’ for blueberry growers (9/11, Fresh Fruit Portal)

**Australia**

- Costa Group makes shift to substrate blueberry production (9/11, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Australian blueberry cooperative to trial exports this season (9/11, Fresh Fruit Portal)
- Global blueberry conference at Coffs Harbour identifies challenges to international market growth (9/8, abc.net.au)

The *Bluespaper* contains links to third party sites that are not maintained by the USHBC.

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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*

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