Setting the Stage for Record Crops in Many North American Growing Regions

In this issue:
Communication Preferences Survey
Crop Updates
U.S. Cold Storage Update
In The News
Grower Resources
Assessment Reminder - $18 per ton
Marketing Reports
Ride the Blue Wave

We want to hear from you!

In an effort to understand and address the communication preferences of members, the USHBC Industry Relations Committee is asking you to take the
Communication Preferences Survey.

The survey can be completed online by clicking on the following link https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WJGKBS8.

If you are unable to complete the survey online, please email the USHBC to obtain a hard copy of the survey.

Crop Updates

Florida: (5/13, Southeast Farm Press) "Although the Florida Panhandle has been hit with excessive rainfall this spring, blueberry yields are on track to be above average" Click Here for rest of article.

Georgia: (5/9, The Packer) "Growers began harvesting in late April and are expected to hit promotable volume in early May, overlapping with Florida production which should run through late May". Click here for rest of article.

California: (5/12, Industry source) The crop continues to do well and is projected to be larger than last year's record harvest. Labor at this time does not seems to be an issue as the crops that have seen significant drought loss have freed up many workers and shifted their harvesting to blueberries. Currently, we're running 2-3 weeks ahead of normal. Expected to peak the week of May 15-16. Quality is good.

New Jersey: (5/12, Industry source) New Jersey is in full bloom and it looks great. We expect a nice timely crop. We will be picking Duke the third week in June (+/- June 16)

Michigan: (5/13, MSU Extension) N"Most varieties are at pink bud...There is a lot of variation from very good growth to poor growth. A lot depends on the site. In a few sites, especially newer plantings with small bushes, dead and shriveled shoot tips show winter injury." Click here for rest of report.

Oregon: (5/19, Industry source) We're still on course for an excellent crop. Weather looks seasonable over the next couple of weeks. Most varieties are into green berry stage with Duke harvest looking to start around week 25 (mid-late June).

Washington & British Columbia: (5/19, Fresh Fruit Portal) "Bumper blueberry crops are expected in Washington State and British Columbia this season, due to good weather conditions..." Click here for rest of article.
U.S. Cold Storage Update

Holdings: At the end of March 130.6 million lbs. of frozen blueberries were reported in cold storage compared to 130.4 million at the end of March in 2013.

Movement: Reported March holdings decreased 20.0 million lbs. compared to the end of February numbers. The 2013 comparable figure was 14.8 million lbs.

Bottom line (opinion): Numbers have come into line with last year's thanks in part to USDA purchases. With the likelihood of a very good sized crop coming in this year we need to continue all efforts to develop new markets and grow 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

In the News

Berry Category Growth Sticks to Double Digit Rate  (5/9, The Packer)

Fewer honeybees lost last winter, survey reports  (5/16, Good Fruit Grower)

Mexico's Berry Sector Showing Strong Growth  (5/9, Fresh Plaza)

Peruvian blueberry exports double in 2014  (5/12, Fresh Fruit Portal)

Grower Resources

Invest in pollination for success with highbush blueberries  (5/6, MSU Extension)

Managing mummy berry shoot strike infections  (5/3/13, MSU Extension) Great chart on effectiveness of fungicide choices and on weather variable that favor infections.

8 ways to improve internal drainage in blueberries  (5/6, Growing Produce)
As we enter the 2014 domestic harvest, the industry is reminded that the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) assessment rate has been increased to $18 per ton beginning with this year's crop. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, after reviewing comments from members of the blueberry industry, approved the USHBC request for an assessment rate increase with an approval announcement made in the September 30, 2013 edition of the Federal Register. The increase took effect on January 1, 2014.

U.S. Customs began collecting the $18 per ton assessment on imported blueberries on January 1st. The increased assessment is also being collected starting with the 2014 domestic blueberry crop with payments due to the USHBC by November 30, 2014. The new assessment rate is reflected in the 2014 USHBC assessment reporting forms sent to growers and handlers.

As blueberry production has steadily increased, the USHBC has discussed the need to generate additional funding to more aggressively promote highbush blueberries and take advantage of the growing scientific knowledge of the healthfulness of our product. After considerable evaluation and discussion, the USHBC unanimously approved a motion in October of 2012 to recommend an increase in the USHBC assessment rate from the original level of .006 cents per pound ($12 per ton) to .009 cents per pound ($18 per ton). The original assessment rate had stood at $12 per ton since the establishment of the Council in the year 2000. The proposed rule was published in the May 20, 2013 edition of the Federal Register for a sixty day comment period. USDA then reviewed these comments and made the final decision on the assessment increase in September of 2013.

Additional funding from this first assessment increase in thirteen years will allow our industry to expand current market promotion and health research efforts at a time when we face a number of challenges. North American highbush blueberry acreage has moved from an estimated 71,075 acres in 2005 to 110,290 acres in 2010. Expanded acreage has led to a corresponding boom in highbush blueberry production. Newly planted acres, and enhancement of existing acreage, has led to successive records in North American highbush blueberry production which currently
totals an estimated 666 million pounds in 2013, more than two times the total of 250 million pounds produced just ten years ago. Given these production increases, there is a need to significantly increase domestic per capita consumption.

The additional funding generated through the $18 per ton assessment will allow the USHBC to continue to build upon and greatly expand promotion of the health awareness of blueberries and reach a larger audience, both here at home and abroad, to encourage greater consumption. Funding will allow our industry to significantly expand health research efforts and move to more extensive human clinical trials to explore promising developments to date in age related health research, an area which remains a major blueberry purchase motivator. Funds will also allow for continued food safety and good management practices education to elevate industry awareness and maintain consumer confidence.

To view a pdf version of the letter above please click here

3rd Annual Blueberry Bootcamp

At the third annual Blueberry Boot Camp in April, top chefs and bloggers dished up dozens of new blueberry recipes, driving a ripple effect on menus across the country.

The group learned about and used eight types of blueberries during the two-day program at the Culinary Institute of America in Napa. Read more and
Setting the Stage for Record Crops in Many North American Growing Regions

watch the video recap!

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 www.ridethebluewave.com.

New USHBC Guidebook Enhances Sales & Marketing Communications

Read more at ridethebluewave.com.

To download the guidebook now, visit ridethebluewave.com/toolkit

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 to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD).

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

Copyright © 2014 US Highbush Blueberry Council, All rights reserved.