



blueberries®

U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

Annual Report

2018

U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

USHBC Members and Alternates - 2019

CALIFORNIA:	Member - William Steed
	Alternate - Young Kwun
FLORIDA:	Member - Brittany Lee
	Alternate - Janet Swilley
GEORGIA:	Member - John Bennett
	Alternate - Jerome Crosby
MICHIGAN:	Member - George Fritz, Jr.
	Alternate - Bob Carini
NEW JERSEY:	Member - Denny Doyle
	Alternate - Paul Macrie III
NORTH CAROLINA:	Member - Chris Barnhill
	Alternate - Neil Moore
OREGON:	Member - Steve Erickson
	Alternate - Doug Krahmer
WASHINGTON:	Member - Rob Dhaliwal
	Alternate - Bryan Sakuma
REGION 1 (Western):	Member - Verne Gingrich
	Alternate - Ellie Norris
REGION 2 (Midwest):	Member - Shelly Ann Hartmann
	Alternate - Patricia Goin
REGION 3 (Northeast):	Member - Dave Arena
	Alternate - Art Galletta
REGION 4 (Southern):	Member - Ryan Atwood
	Alternate - Stacy Spivey
HANDLER:	Member - Guy Cotton
	Alternate - Risa Bakker
IMPORTER #1:	Member - John Johnston
	Alternate - Bonnie Lundblad
IMPORTER #2:	Member - Brian Bock
	Alternate - Brian Caster
IMPORTER #3:	Member - Janice Honigberg
	Alternate - Andrew Maiman
IMPORTER #4:	Member - Bo Slack
	Alternate - Tom Bodtke
EXPORTER 1 (Chile):	Member - Jorge Andres Varela
	Alternate - Carlos Abujatum
EXPORTER 2 (Canada):	Member - Ray Biln
	Alternate - Jesse Brar
PUBLIC MEMBER:	Member - Amy Howell
	Alternate - Bill Cline

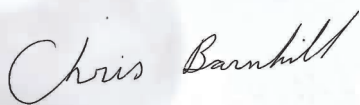
Chairman's Message

*E*very year as I serve in this position I think that was an eventful interesting year, the next one will be normal. Wrong. It seems each year has a new set of challenges. Either in house with our great leader Mark retiring, or our industry having the issues of weather, regulations, labor, prices, and many other issues for which everyone looks to us for answers. Thank the Lord we have the cooperation we do with all people and areas involved. I would hate to see this industry if we didn't have USHBC and NABC. They bring understanding, knowledge, and a wonderful group of people together to unify and grow our business.

As our great leader moves to his next adventure in life. We have been so blessed to have had him for as long as we have. He has taken us from an infant stage to an adult stage in our organization. His even keel has helped us through a lot of what could have been difficult areas. He has gone above and beyond what we expected of him. He has always given 100+ percent. His work ethics have also been reflected in our wonderful staff. Mark we will miss you. We love you and wish the best life has to offer you in the future.

The job Tom Bodtke and others are doing in selecting Mark's replacement is outstanding. Thanks to all involved for your time. Especially Tom, he took the task and ran with it. I guess calling anyone Mark's replacement isn't right. Mark could never be replaced, but whoever we pick will be a great addition to our team.

As we start our domestic picking season we already have issues. I hope and pray things will level out and give us smooth sailing the rest of the season. I pray God's Blessing over every one of you. Have a fruitful and prosperous season.



Chris Barnhill
Chairman
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

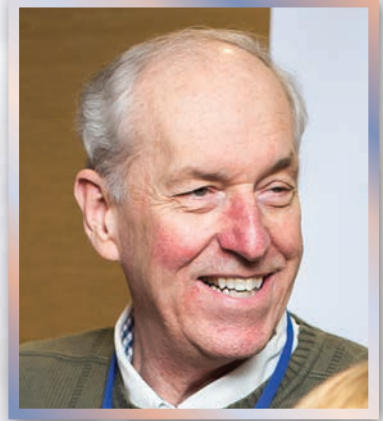


Executive Director's Message

A Look Back and a Step Forward

What do you recall from 1994? Baseball fans may remember that it was the first year that the World Series was cancelled. Video gamers might remember it was the year that PlayStation was launched. History buffs may recall that Nelson Mandela became the President of South Africa in 1994. Those into pop culture might remember that Lisa Marie Presley and Michael Jackson were married that year, Forrest Gump was a top movie and Seinfeld was the most popular show on television.

My best memory of 1994 was joining the blueberry industry. Twenty-five years have passed by in the blink of an eye and I want to thank you all for letting me be a part of the blueberry team all these years. I have very much appreciated the support and trust you have given me as your Executive Director, as well as the great friendships I have made and will continue to enjoy long after I move on this year.



It has been a fun run. We should all be proud of what our industry has achieved to date and excited about what the future will hold. All the hard work and forward thinking of our industry members has made blueberries synonymous with health, has opened new offshore markets for our berries and helped to increase blueberry interest and demand here at home and overseas as well. We are seeing our product sold not only as fresh or frozen blueberries but also in a variety of new forms from powders and concentrates to dried. Our berries are also showing up in a wide range of categories including pet foods and cosmetics. Working together as an industry we have and will continue to address opportunities and challenges in the years to come.

Saying good bye is not easy and I know that I will wonder how the crop is doing each season, look for blueberry news coverage and keep an eye out at the grocery store for displays and new blueberry products.... old habits are hard to break!

I thank you all for allowing me to work for you over the years and for making me a part of the "blueberry family".

With Best Wishes and Fond Memories,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Villata".

Mark Villata
USHBC Executive Director

USHBC Executive Officers



Christopher Barnhill
Chairman, North Carolina



Shelly Hartmann
Vice Chairman, Michigan



George Fritz, Jr.
Secretary, Michigan



Mark Villata
Executive Director, California



Brittany Lee
Treasurer, Florida



Bill Steed
Member at Large, California



Art Galletta
Past Chairman,
New Jersey

USHBC Meeting Schedule and Invitation

USHBC meetings are open to all members of the industry and offer an excellent opportunity to learn more about the Council and the various market promotion and health research activities being conducted by the USHBC. These open meetings also offer the opportunity to contribute by sharing your thoughts with the USHBC.

All members of the blueberry industry are encouraged to attend and participate in USHBC meetings and are asked to also consider future service with the USHBC as an elected member or alternate. Please contact the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111 if you have any questions concerning the USHBC or future meetings, or for more information about USHBC member or alternate positions.

2019 USHBC Fall Meeting

October 2 to October 4, 2019
Tour on Tuesday, October 1, 2019

Courtyard Marriott
480 Columbia Point Drive
Richland, Washington 99352

Lodge at Columbia Point
503 Columbia Point
Richland, Washington 99352

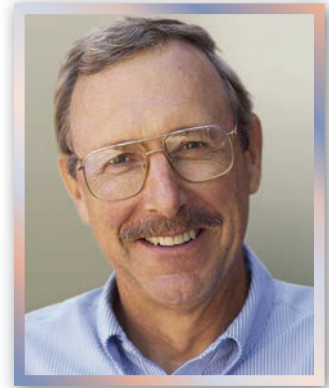
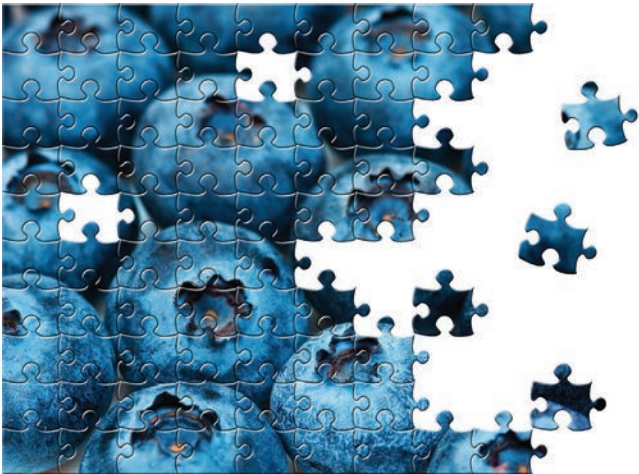
2020 USHBC Spring Meeting

March 4 to March 6, 2020
Tour on Tuesday, March 3, 2020

The Alexandrian Hotel
480 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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 of 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, S.W. Washington DC 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3572 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD).

The Blueberry and Health Puzzle – One Piece at a Time



Dave Brazelton
Chairman, USHBC
Health Research
Committee, Oregon

The USHBC Health Research Committee continues to explore the health benefits of blueberries engaging some of the world’s leading researchers to conduct the highest quality scientific research. This is truly independent research that doesn’t in any way guarantee results, but over the past several years, with growing evidence on the benefits of blueberries, the health halo around blueberries continues to grow. With the support of blueberry stakeholders we have been able to transition from funding small animal studies to larger human clinical studies. These types of studies require a large investment of funds in order to carefully conduct a study that has the potential to produce significant results. One of the reasons it is difficult to conduct a nutrition study with human subjects is because there are individual differences in how each person responds to a diet or a food. How individuals respond to the addition of blueberries to their diet may depend on their age, body size, gender, current state of health, their usual diet, the type of bacteria that reside in their gut, and many other factors. Despite all of these variables, we are seeing some positive effects when blueberries are added to the diet, but the results from each study provide just one piece to a larger puzzle showing us how blueberries can affect human health. Each puzzle piece requires a significant amount of time and funding.

Over the past 10 years, we have invested almost 7 million dollars in funding research studies conducted at 38 different academic institutions throughout the US, Canada and Europe. This has resulted in 37 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals with several more pending publication. We currently have 11 studies in progress and we have just funded 5 more studies for the 2019 research year. (Figure 1) The newly funded studies will explore the effect of blueberry consumption in areas such as exercise, the gut microbiome, gastrointestinal disorders and chronic renal disease.

In addition to providing funds for studies that we choose from a group of proposals requesting research funds, we also look for other ways we can both “stretch the grower’s dollar” and keep blueberries in the minds of both researchers and consumers. One way we accomplish this is by providing the same freeze-dried blueberry powder that we use in our own funded studies to other researchers who have their own funding but are interested in studying blueberries. This helps add to the number of studies that have used our highbush blueberry powder and provides new evidence for the role of blueberries in health. In other words, more puzzle pieces to add to the puzzle.

An excellent example of this is our participation in two very large clinical studies that are looking at the effect of diet as well as other interventions on the development of age-associated cognitive decline. These studies require whole foods so for one study, the MIND Trial, we are providing frozen blueberries. This 3 year, 14.5 million dollar, National Institute of Health (NIH)-funded study will evaluate the effect of the MIND diet on age-associated cognitive decline.

Health Research

Blueberries are only one component of the diet, but based on both animal and human studies that have shown a benefit of blueberries on brain health, the researchers wanted the subjects to include blueberries in their diet. They contacted the USHBC and we are now providing frozen blueberries for their study.

Similarly, there is another large, 20 million dollar study, the POINTER study, that has just begun which is funded by the Alzheimer's Association. The subjects in this study will also be following the MIND diet, but there will be 2500 subjects in five different locations across the US. The researchers want half of the participants to consume blueberries as part of the MIND diet so the USHBC will be providing rebate coupons to encourage the participants to purchase and consume blueberries. (Fig 2)

The USHBC could not afford to directly fund very large clinicals such as these. Being invited to participate by providing blueberries speaks to the cumulation of years of research exploring and documenting these health effects. We are truly stretching our grower's dollars.

In addition to money, human studies also require time. Several years ago we invested in a large clinical trial involving over 100 subjects who were required to participate in the study for 6 months. This was the largest and longest study that has evaluated the effect of blueberry consumption in men and women who have metabolic syndrome. Individuals with metabolic syndrome are obese and have a combination of conditions such as pre-diabetes, high blood pressure, or abnormal lipid levels. We found that subjects who consumed blueberry powder equivalent to 1 cup of blueberries per day showed significant improvements in vascular function, including blood flow and elasticity of the blood vessels over those who were given a placebo and did not receive blueberry powder. We also saw that the equivalent of 1 cup of blueberries per day compared to the placebo also resulted in significant increases in HDL-C (i.e., "good cholesterol") levels.

We want to thank our grower stakeholders for their commitment to USHBC. We still have much to explore regarding blueberries and health. With your support we can continue this exciting journey and add more pieces to the puzzle.

To see a list of our funded studies that have been published in scientific journals, visit the USHBC website at <https://ushbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/published-studies-as-of-2.11.19.pdf>



Current Status of the USHBC Research Program



Rebate certificate for participants in the U.S. Pointer Study

Don't Forget the Basics

It seems like everyday we are hearing about new food safety concerns, extensions and modifications to food safety guidelines and new rules and procedures suggested by everyone from legislators to retailers. Keeping up with this important and continually evolving issue can at times feel like a never-ending task, but through it all it is important to remember the “basics” of good management practices.

The “basics” of the health and hygiene of your workers, field and packing house sanitation and water management form a strong foundation for your food safety plan. Paying close attention to these basics will go a long way in helping you to address this important issue and reduce some of the confusion you may have with all the discussion about food safety.

Food safety education remains front and center as the primary task of the USHBC Good Practices Committee and we will continue to assist the highbush blueberry industry, through information and education, in helping our growers meet this need. Our recently produced food safety leaflet is an example of this type of assistance and I hope that you have all had a chance to review its contents and put its suggestions to use. I encourage you to please contact the USHBC office if you would like to receive additional copies of this leaflet which will help you put the “basics” into place at your operation.

Along with food safety education, the Good Practices Committee has also been involved in looking at advancements in agricultural management practices through its Blueberry Technology Subcommittee. Recognizing the importance of this area to our growers, we are pleased to announce that this subcommittee has now evolved into a full standing USHBC committee.

The mission of the Blueberry Technology Committee will be to continue its effort to create awareness of existing technology as well as to help encourage the development of new innovative technological methods to meet the needs of our industry and our customers. The Blueberry Technology Committee will work to encourage the development of new cutting-edge technology by education institutions and technology innovators in all fields related to our industry ranging from crop production and harvesting to packing and shipping. The committee is currently working on our second technical symposium scheduled for September 29, 2020 in conjunction with the NABC and USHBC fall meetings in Boston, Massachusetts.

Food safety education and innovation, two examples of how the USHBC is working to help you navigate these challenges and be assured that the USHBC Good Practices Committee will continue its efforts to help you keep the “basics” top of mind.



**Denny Doyle, Chairman
USHBC Good Practices
Committee, New Jersey**

Big Wins for the Blueberry Industry

This fall the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) will be meeting in my home State of Washington touring the fertile ground east of the Cascade Mountain range following the mighty Columbia River. We invite you to attend, learn and participate in our ever-expanding industry October 1-4, 2019. As chairman of the Industry Relations Committee, our members are committed to grower engagement with the following key initiatives for the development of a strong Blueberry future.

Leadership is key to consumer consumption, category management and most important grower economics so it is imperative that you or your team participate in USHBC and North American Blueberry Council (NABC) for the betterment of the industry. As blueberry supply throughout the Americas continues to grow in all regions, it is making it even more important for us all to stay connected with the blueberry industry. The Industry Relations Committee is tasked with informing and educating the industry through regional, state and commission leaders but only you can make a difference! We need your support to update the USHBC contact information by sending your information (Name, title, company, address, email, phone number) to: info@blueberry.org, if you cannot be reached you'll be the last to know.

In 2019, our committee continues to expand industry outreach activities with these great programs:

1. The grower outreach program expanded in 2019 with Victoria De Bruin our Marketing Manager exceeding expectations touring the country and updating growers on all our Big Wins.
2. Blueberry Leadership Program (formally the *Ambassador Program*) with a stronger emphasis on the future leaders of the blueberry industry. This program and others below enhance the Council encouraging grower involvement with representation from all ages and diversity.
3. *Behind the Blue Playbook* for the industry with new videos focusing on Council activities and successes, sample presentations and materials for regional and state representatives to engage our growers.



Bo Slack
Chairman, USHBC
Industry Relations
Committee, Washington

4. *Behind the Blue* e-newsletter has a fresh look and delivers USHBC research, promotion and activity updates to let blueberry industry growers and marketers be the first to know.

5. Website (ushbc.org) redesign and consolidation bringing our platform into the 21st century.

6. Omnilert, our Emergency Notification System updating your teams on crisis issues.

The New Blueberry Leadership Program will continue to generate awareness and educate industry members on the functions and activities of the USHBC. Through the Blueberry Leadership

Program industry members are invited to attend and observe NABC and USHBC meetings to gain a better appreciation of these programs, which will hopefully lead to their consideration of future participation. Most importantly this educational program is intended to bring new individuals from throughout the industry (both domestic and foreign) into the Council and is funded by both the NABC and USHBC. The Blueberry Leadership Program will always prioritize the sponsoring of a diverse base, including our next generation of blueberry growers and marketers with the goal of promoting their future industry participation. The USHBC Industry Relations Committee will solicit the help of USHBC, NABC and industry members from the specific region to identify possible nominees from their regions.

I can't express myself more in saying that coming to a USHBC event is so rewarding on an academic and social networking level with all the key leaders throughout the Americas formulating new ideas and opportunities for future success in the industry.

Please join us for a future event and update your contact information today!



Behind The **Blue** | U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

Spring Meeting Success: New Year, New Campaign

What better way to kick off our 2019 campaign than with the help of 150 growers, packers and marketers in attendance at our Spring Meeting!

The meetings included information in each of our communication pillars: from health to consumers, food tech to good agriculture practices.

Blueberry Technology – Planning for the Future

This is the initial report from the Technology Committee, but not the first work that has been done by the USHBC. Previous to 2019 the Committee worked as a sub-committee under the direction of the Good Practices Committee. It was determined that the needs of the industry in the area of technology is significant and for that reason we have been moved to a Standing Committee of the organization.

When initially organized it was assumed that the sub-committee would focus on harvesting of fresh blueberries as labor continues to go up in price and go down in availability. However, Ag-technology can and does touch so many of our farms in various ways; from basic field practices like weed control to harvesting to packing lines. Changes in all of these areas are occurring rapidly as robotics, drones and sensor technology all are being applied to agriculture.

In 2018, as reported by the Good Practices Committee, our sub-committee launched the first Blueberry Technology Symposium and it was highly successful based upon reports from both our growers and the presenters. What became apparent in putting together that meeting was that our industry needs to define its technology goals and promote those to an ever more active sector of technology looking for opportunity to enter the agricultural industry.

Starting in 2019 our Committee will begin to define our industry needs and once those have been determined we will work with the growers to establish priorities and begin to promote the blueberry industry to the technology community.

At the same time, we haven't forgotten about the Technology Symposium. We are hard at work planning the second Symposium for our October 2020 meetings to be held in Boston, MA. We look forward to your input and support.



Rod Cook, Chairman
USHBC Technology
Committee
Washington

Taking Blueberries to the Next Level

Blueberries started 2018 in a position of strength – and we built on that momentum to fuel another successful year. As the year began, we had already secured blueberries' position as consumers' top berry, and 75% of Americans were on the path to purchase. That represented a 10% increase over 2013 – and demonstrated that consumers are demanding blueberries now more than ever before (USHBC U&A 2017). Additionally, between 2013-2017, blueberry sales at retail grew significantly – fresh volume sales were up 27%, fresh dollar sales were up 34% and share of fresh berry volume was up 1.8%.

During the same time period, however, blueberries' share of the fresh produce category remained flat, confirming that the industry needed to boost marketing efforts and take more aggressive action to stay ahead of the other fruits trying to grow their share of hearts and carts.

To help increase consumption at the pace production requires, the USHBC identified a larger target audience with immediate growth potential to serve as the focus for amplified marketing efforts. Based on the USHBC's 2016 opportunity assessment study, moderate blueberry users offered the best opportunity for growth. These users comprise one fourth of the population and are already primed to eat more blueberries in the coming years – in 2018, we accelerated that trend.

We began taking blueberries to the next level, continuing to elevate them and make the kind of impact demanded for your business. We placed blueberries of all forms front of mind and top of list, and we used a powerful and single-minded idea to get blueberries on the lips and tongues of the USHBC's most important audiences.

We worked with decision-makers who feed millions at chain restaurants and K-12 schools, providing personalized education and concepts to help get more blueberries onto more menus. We also reached out to and partnered with health professionals, creating highly credible ambassadors to help us expand the Positively Bluetiful blueberry health halo.

USHBC experienced many big wins in 2018, reaching moderate users, as well as the media outlets, chefs, school nutrition professionals, health professionals and social media personalities influencing their food choices.

We are delighted to report that the results we have seen in the U.S. are nothing short of Bluetiful:

- In 2018, 65% of volume growth in the fresh berry category was generated by blueberries, while frozen blueberries were the top-selling frozen fruit and berry.
- Fresh blueberries produced the highest year-over-year percentage dollar growth of any of the top 15 fresh fruit and vegetable categories.
- Fresh blueberries gained 9.3% in dollars vs. 2017.
- Fresh blueberries were up 5.2% in volume, with a total of 362 million pounds sold.
- Frozen blueberries were up 5.6% in volume, with a total of 68.9 million pounds sold.

Source: U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council: Category Partners analysis powered by Nielsen US Scan, 52-weeks ending 12/29/18



The Positively Bluetiful campaign connects all the indisputable blueberry product truths. It brings to life the emotional qualities that reinforce the brilliance of your little blue dynamos.

Positively Bluetiful Campaign

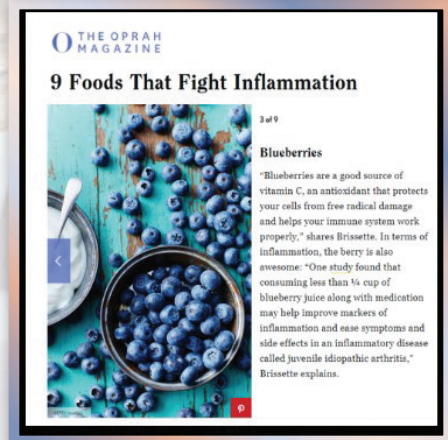
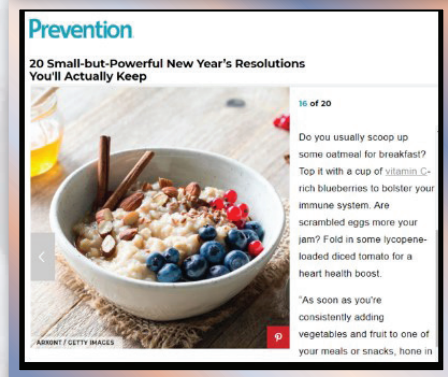
The Positively Bluetiful campaign served as a unifying platform for the USHBC's year-round "always-on" promotion programs as well as for seasonal "heavy-up" programs during peak supply in the winter and summer. It was brought to life through entertaining online video ads, social media videos, banner ads, content on blueberry council.org and original, modern lifestyle photography. The campaign was rounded out with ongoing media relations, social media and several exciting influencer partnerships.

Media Relations

We crafted and secured compelling media pitches, TV segments and online exclusives, keeping blueberries in the headlines. Each placement gave moderate users ample reasons to buy them by the boxful and eat them by the handful. We closed the year with 136 top tier placements (original goal: 75) and more than 5 billion impressions, with a media quality score of 7.9 (goal 7). Top placements included outlets such as CNN, Healthline, Reader's Digest, FOX & Friends, TODAY Show, MSN, The Cheat Sheet, Men's Health, Shape and so much more.

Social Media and Influencers

To moderate users, social media is personal media – and a vital channel for motivating blueberry purchases and word of mouth recommendations. That's why USHBC served up mouthwatering content across Facebook,



Media coverage heavily featured our health messaging, showcasing blueberries as a top fruit for health and wellness.

Communications and Promotions

Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter on an ongoing basis. We used creative themes, health information and intriguing recipes to entertain and inspire moderate users to eat more blueberries of all forms.

We also know these fruit lovers buy what they see online, so USHBC tapped into a group of key influencers and used vibrant visual content to expand and engage our base of social followers. These influencers pushed moderate users deeper down the path to purchase by featuring delicious and simple ways to use blueberries. Exciting 2018 influencer partnerships included Food Network star Brandi Milloy, A Couple Cook, Best of Vegan, Paola Marquez, FitFoodieFinds and Ambitious Kitchen.

- We partnered with A Couple Cooks and Fit Foodie Finds to create custom video content on how to have a #PositivelyBluetiful day with blueberries, from on-the-go snacks to recipes. These partners created a mix of short, snackable video content and Instagram Stories for their followers.
- We launched Instagram giveaways to further engage consumers via their favorite influencers, such as Ambitious Kitchen's #PostivelyBluetiful morning Vitamix giveaway.
- We activated USHBC's group of micro-influencers to support the Positively Bluetiful campaign during National Blueberry Month (July) and beyond.
- We reposted content from blueberry fans and influencers to cross-promote across USHBC's social media pages and in Instagram Stories, generating awareness for the campaign throughout the year.

Some key milestones included:

- Instagram following surpassed 10,000 followers
- 4.4 million views of blueberries videos posted by influencers
- Nearly 500,000 consumer engagements
- More than 2 million other social media views



Social media influencers created unique recipes with blueberries and showcased how they fit into Positively Bluetiful lives – from sharing with friends and family to enjoying in a daily routine.

Communications and Promotions

Digital Advertising Campaign

We connected with moderate users, by making blueberries an even greater part of their daily lives. For the first time ever, we launched a year-round digital advertising campaign that reached 69% of moderate users, 3 times a day, 365 days a year with the messages that research identified as most compelling. Blueberries became a part of the experiences and activities our users enjoy on a regular basis.

- Spotify: We ran blueberry ads on the main stations moderate users listen to on this radio platform that streams music from a laptop, smartphone or other device.
- ESPN.com: Moderate users are avid sports fans, so we partnered with ESPN.com not only to reach them with ads where they are, but to quickly involve more male consumers and a more diverse audience.
- Shopkick: This shopping app rewards consumers for showing interest in blueberries.
- AccuWeather: We coordinated Positively Bluetiful ads to reach people in markets expecting a blue sky and sunny day.
- Email: We placed blueberry ads in e-blasts to e-newsletter subscribers of outlets such as Parents Magazine and Better Homes & Gardens.
- Social Media: Social media is personal media to moderate users, and they are likely to recommend what they see from brands on these channels. We served up video and static ads on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

We also used a variety of targeting techniques to reach the right people in the right moment, bringing them closer and closer to the point of purchase.

- Behavioral: Served ads to people based on when they typically shop for groceries. Moderate users received blueberry ads throughout the day leading up to that grocery store visit.
- Location-Based: Served ads to moderate users in the vicinity of grocery stores, health clubs and smoothie bars to drive their purchase considerations toward blueberries.
- Retargeting: Targeted ads to follow moderate users around the web based on their online behaviors (including on social media).



USHBC reached 69% of moderate users, 3 times a day, on any given day of the year, with high-performing banner ads and videos showcasing Positively Bluetiful blueberries.



We made blueberries a part of the daily lives of moderate users by appearing in the places they spend time and as they plan trips to the grocery store.

Communications and Promotions



Digital advertising campaign performance increased week over week through August. To continue the momentum, we introduced refreshed creative to keep moderate users buying blueberries by the boxful and eating them by the handful.

The Positively Bluetiful ad campaign exceeded all performance goals, leading to higher than industry benchmarks for clicks (0.28%) and video completion rates (82%). The campaign also over-delivered with 30 million added-value (free) impressions, thus significantly increasing anticipated results.

Additional exciting results included:

- 4.6 million video views (goal: 1.9 million)
- \$9.08 CPM (goal: \$13.88; the lower the better)
- 229,323 ad clicks (goal: 26k)
- 4 million social media engagements (goal: 2 million)

Inspiring Food Lovers at BlueberryCouncil.org

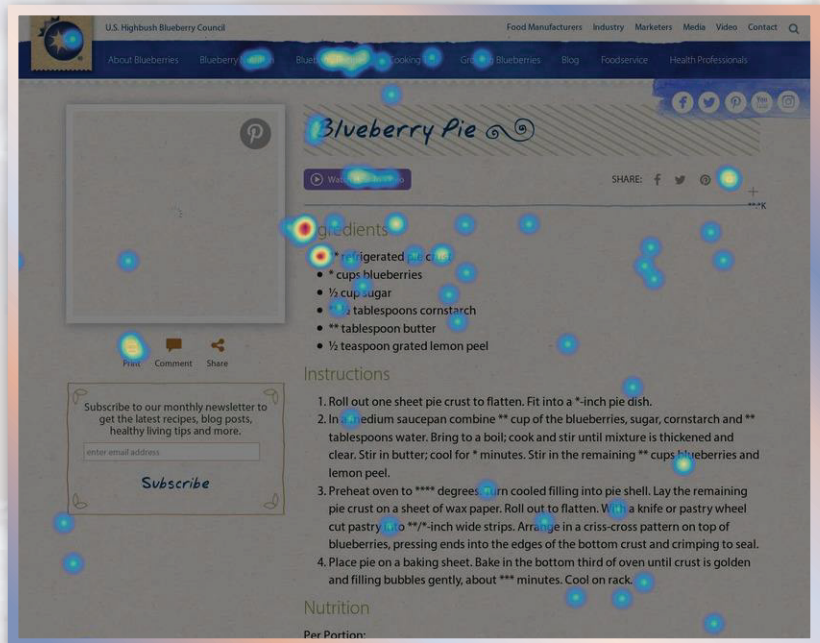
An organization's website represents an important aspect of its marketing mix, – comprised of all necessary touchpoints for persuading one's target audience. There, as with social media, we have complete control for shaping the USHBC's message based on our priorities and on consumers' needs. We can provide the information that is most in line with what they are seeking related to food and meal planning, delivered in their preferred way.

In 2018, we studied our target audience of moderate users to build our understanding of their tendencies and preferences online. Consumer interviews and "heatmapping" revealed the types of meals they seek, how often they search for inspiration, how they save recipe ideas, and more. Armed with these findings, we made small but impactful improvements to our online efforts. All served our goal of making the USHBC more influential in driving demand for blueberries of all forms.

We pursued three primary sets of activities:

- Enhancements to the recipe page layout on blueberrycouncil.org to further engage our audience.
- An evolved Google advertising strategy geared toward capturing the attention of those with blueberries on the brain, but also reaching and "converting" general fruit lovers and recipe searchers into blueberrycouncil.org visitors.
- Updates to the USHBC blog and email marketing program, with more targeted content based on key learnings involving our audience of 13,000+ subscribers.

By the end of 2018, the USHBC had generated roughly 700,000 recipe page views, 40% above our goal of 500,000. We also achieved above-average marks for email open rates and click rates, indicating our success in tailoring our blog content to gain greater attention from our fans.




The Council used a heatmapping tool called Hotjar to see how consumers interact with our recipe pages.

THE BERRY THAT LOVES YOU BACK

Positively BLUETIFUL


You've got questions, we've got answers

Precise measurements, specific tools, exact instructions ... sometimes it can feel like baking requires *absolute* perfection and we've all been set up to fail. But, just because baking is a science doesn't mean it has to be intimidating, and we have one of our expert blueberry recipe developers and creator of [Swirls of Flavor](#), Gwynn Galvin, here to prove it. [Read on for our Q&A!](#)



Best in Baked Goods

Sweet, savory, gluten-free – whatever you're raring to try, we have a [positively bluetiful recipe](#) for you.



Baking Q&A: Tips, Tricks, and Debunking Common Myths


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May 8, 2018

We all love eating baked goods, but not everyone loves the work that goes into making them ourselves. Whether you're worried about how much time it takes, or the health benefits a recipe may lack, baking can be a bit of a turn-off, regardless of experience level. With that in mind, we spoke with expert recipe developer and creator of [Swirls of Flavor](#), Gwynn Galvin, to help put your mind at ease and your hands to work.

1. What are some of the biggest mistakes people make when baking?




Baking is a science and people often don't realize how crucial it is to accurately measure ingredients. For example, the way you measure flour (and other dry ingredients) can determine if your final product is dense and dry or light and moist. You don't want the flour to be packed into the measuring cup, so don't swoop the measuring cup into the flour canister or bag – this will pack in more flour than what you need. Instead, spoon the flour into your measuring cup and then level off at the rim using the flat edge of a knife.




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Blog Categories

-  **Recipe Ideas**
Find inspiration with the latest tasty and simple-to-make blueberry recipes.
-  **Foodservice**
Discover how blueberries bring innovation to menus nationwide.
-  **Events**
Follow blueberries on their culinary journey at events across the country.

Featured Blueberry Recipes

-  **Balanced Blueberry**

Moderate users enjoy blueberries in baked goods, and we learned that our online audience also loves content that offers tips or tutorials. We tailored blog and email content to these findings, successfully drawing in our audience.

Health Professional Programs

Breaking Through the Clutter

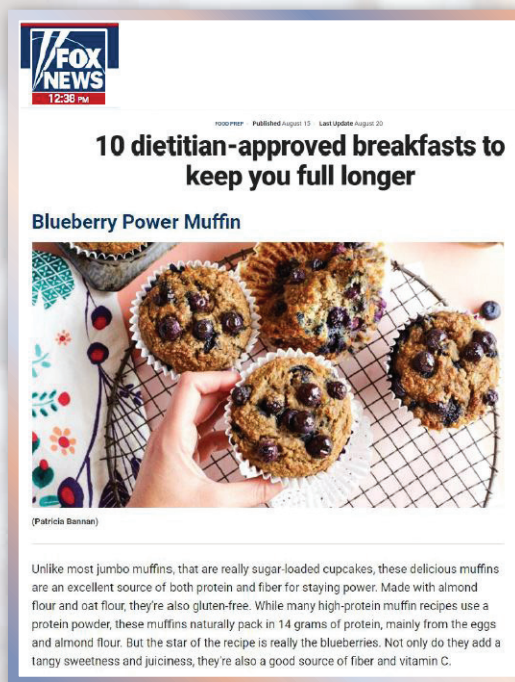
Many Americans – including the moderate and heavy blueberry users USHBC targets – want health benefits from the foods they choose. However, they are overwhelmed by the abundance of conflicting nutrition information they encounter every day. According to the 2017 IFIC Food & Health Survey, these consumers see dietitians and health professionals as the most trusted sources for guiding food choices. This trust reinforces the importance of engaging such health influencers to steer consumers toward blueberries more often. By educating and galvanizing health professionals to recommend blueberries of all forms, the USHBC's health professional communication programs build credibility for and maintain high awareness of blueberries' health benefits. They also extend the reach and impact of all our consumer-facing programs.

Building on our successful increase in publicity last year, the USHBC continued to work with a group of health professional ambassadors with strong traditional and/or social media presences. The “Blue Crew,” in the ambassador role, connected with moderate users via their blogs and social media platforms, as well as in top-tier media outlets online, on the radio and in TV segments. They shared high-priority messaging on blueberry health, taste, and USHBC-funded research studies. We also pitched the Blue Crew to media outlets as subject matter experts on a range of seasonal topics. On their websites, blogs and social media pages, the Blue Crew created and promoted original, healthful recipes highlighting fresh and frozen blueberries.

The Blue Crew's efforts led to:

- 19 print, digital, TV and radio placements in outlets such as EatThisNotThat.com, ABC7/KABC LA and Southern California, NBCnews.com and FoxNews.com (goal: 12 placements)
- 980+ million media impressions*
- *Note: this includes pickup from the two consumer mat releases where Blue Crew members were quoted
- 4,080 consumer engagements related to the recipes (likes, shares and comments) on social media

The USHBC also continued its work with retail dietitians in 2018, cultivating partnerships with 30 dietitians that resulted in 53 retail events (exceeding goal of 30 partnerships). We reached approximately 3,120 customers in-store and 270,000 customers via store magazines, blogs and social media channels.



In 2018, the USHBC's Blue Crew members landed 19 health-related media stories, including key, "top-tier" placements in ABCnews.com, Foxnews.com and Readers Digest.

Communications and Promotions

Mirroring the consumer program, the USHBC worked with select influencers who are health professionals and/or wellness experts to create engaging visuals that would reach a new set of moderate users via Instagram. The influencers shared nutrition information, research study news and tips, and blueberry-related product giveaways. The partnerships resulted in just under 34,000 Instagram Story views and just under 14,000 engagements (likes, shares, comments).

The USHBC also sponsored the 2018 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' annual Food & Nutrition Conference and Expo™ (FNCE®). We connected with thousands of registered dietitians in person at the conference as well as online, hosting an Instagram food styling contest and promoting social media posts from Blue Crew members. A new “positively bluetiful” backdrop and booth décor outfitted the USHBC's 10x20 expo booth, situated in a prime corner location. Based on the success of last year's conference, USHBC hosted another off-site, invite-only event for registered dietitians. We partnered with belVita Breakfast Biscuits to bring 24 media-savvy professionals to an exercise class and networking breakfast at a nearby Soul Cycle studio during the conference. The event also included a research presentation by a leading USHBC researcher, Jason Bradenburg, PhD, Frasier University. In his presentation, Dr. Bradenburg presented preliminary research findings of his study on blueberry intake related to running performance and recovery. To further disseminate onsite messaging, attendees took home USHBC collateral and printed education materials.

Results included:

- 24 attendees (19 of which were top-tier media RD influencers) at the invite-only Soul Cycle class and networking breakfast (goal: 24 attendees, 12 being top-tier)
- 760,000 organic impressions on social media from the invite-only event
- 2,500 samples over three days
- 5,500 pieces of USHBC collateral and education materials distributed
- 31 submissions to the #BluetifulShot Instagram Contest (goal: 60 submissions)
- 3,600+ social media engagements among RDs and their followers (goal: 6,000)



The USHBC team connected one-on-one with thousands of health professionals at FNCE®. We passed out delicious recipe samples to help persuade them to recommend blueberries of all forms to their clientele.

Foodservice Programs

Chefs Explore Blueberries on Menus

Consumers today spend more on food away from home than in it. The USHBC increasingly must show foodservice menu decision makers that blueberries are a familiar favorite that can transform menus and drive orders. The goal of our foodservice promotions is to educate and inspire chefs about the versatility and culinary benefits that consumers' top preferred berry brings to menus. With 76% of foodservice operators regularly purchasing IQF blueberries (USHBC Opportunity Assessment 2016), frozen has a real opportunity for growth in this segment. By influencing menu decision makers, the USHBC can capture greater "share of stomach" away from home and impact the high-volume frozen blueberry purchases that reach millions and millions of consumers each year.



The 2018 Blueberry Culinary Deep Dive 2.0 at The Culinary Vegetable Institute – 100% of attending operators report increased intent to incorporate different blueberry forms on menus post-program.

This year, the USHBC hosted the Blueberry Culinary Deep Dive 2.0 at The Culinary Vegetable Institute. We gathered seven influential menu decision-makers representing high-volume operations for a multi-day, hands-on educational immersion program.

Led by Chef Jamie Simpson, the daily kitchen workshops gave the chefs an opportunity to explore the culinary versatility of all forms of blueberries, while the one-on-one breakout sessions presented personalized menu concepts, research and consumer insights tailored specifically to their operation and customer base. Following the event, all of the attending operators reported increased likelihood to use blueberries of all forms on menus (71% highly likely; 29% very likely).



During the Blueberry Culinary Deep Dive, chef attendees explored the application of blueberry's culinary versatility to current menu trends.

Over the past few years, the Council has interacted with, educated and partnered with decision-makers collectively responsible for tens of thousands of restaurant operations. The USHBC's one-to-few approach has cultivated close relationships in the industry and inspired several blueberry menu items from major restaurant

Communications and Promotions

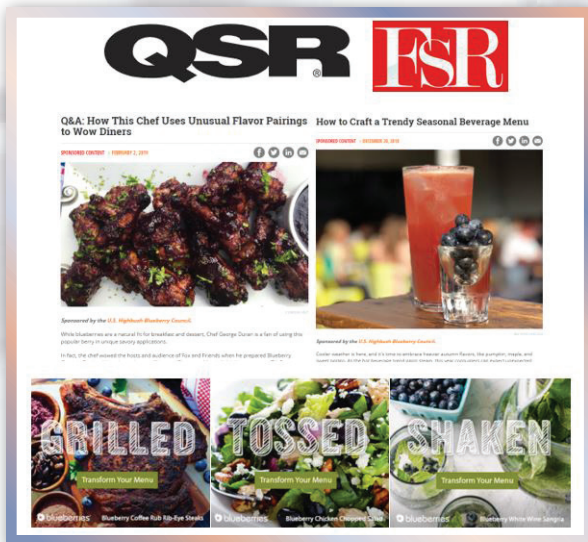
names, including both limited-time offers and permanent offerings. Examples from recent years include:

- Peet's Coffee & Tea Blueberry Pop Tart
- Dairy Queen's Berry Cheesecake Blizzard
- Farmer's Fridge's Blueberry Mezze Salad with Blueberry Vinaigrette
- Wendy's Blueberry Pineapple FruiTea Chiller
- Disney: The World of Avatar's Blueberry Cream Cheese Mousse dessert
- IHOP's new blueberry pancake and waffle topping
- Panera's fresh blueberry muffin (revised recipe)
- Tropical Smoothie Café's Blueberry Truffle Smoothie
- McAlister's Deli's Pecan Berry Salad
- BJ's Restaurant's Kale, Roasted Brussels Sprouts & Blueberry Salad
- Huddle House's Blueberry Pancakes
- Sizzler's two seasonal summer salads featuring blueberries, plus their fall blueberry lemonade
- LYFE Kitchen's Blueberry Budino Chia Pudding



Behind-the-scenes look at the personalized blueberry menu concepts presented to Tropical Smoothie Café during one-on-one meetings at the Blueberry Culinary Deep Dive.

While the one-to-few approach has proven to be quite impactful, the USHBC also reached a broader foodservice audience through paid partnerships and earned media to keep blueberries top of mind when chefs are seeking menu ideas and inspiration. Foodservice media and digital marketing efforts in 2018 resulted in 42 earned media placements that reached nearly 5.4 million foodservice professionals, as well as digital marketing in top-tier industry publications that reached another 4.7+ million foodservice professionals.



In 2018, 42 foodservice media placements reaching nearly 5.4 million readers supported the USHBC's goal of reaching more foodservice decision-makers with influential selling points in the channels they look to for industry trends and inspiration.



Deep Dive chef attendees enjoyed a blueberry harvest tour and dinner educating them about blueberries from farm-to-fork and instilling an appreciation for blueberries' innate wholesomeness. When asked how relevant attendees found the tour to be in expanding their knowledge about blueberries and using them on menus, 86% ranked the harvest dinner and farm tour "extremely informative."

Communications and Promotions

Transforming School Nutrition from Good to Positively Bluetiful

Cost savings, kitchen efficiencies and ingredient cross-utilization are key for school nutrition professionals working to meet their bottom line. In addition, they must solve a new challenge that has emerged over the past 10-20 years: schools are no longer just responsible for serving nutritionally-balanced meals, they must educate students about nutrition as well.

Childhood obesity affects nearly 1 in 5 young people of school age (6 to 19 years) in the U.S. today. Schools are in a unique position to provide students with opportunities to learn about and practice healthy eating behaviors. What better ingredient to help teach children about nutrition than blueberries? Beloved by families and illuminated by a natural health halo, blueberries are also a cafeteria favorite with their versatility, low-labor and cross-utilization in the kitchen. By educating kids about the nutritious and delicious benefits of blueberries, the USHBC is helping raise the next generation of blueberry lovers and laying the foundation for a lifetime of blueberry purchases.

In 2018, we carved a new path in our school foodservice program, joining a credible, high-profile program that schools believe in and fits within the USHBC's mission: the national Farm to School initiative. Over 43,000 schools participate in the initiative, providing access to school nutrition professionals and



Carrollton City School's Blueberry Bonanza Week saw a 11% increase in lunch participation at the junior high school as a result of the promotions.



During Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Blueberry Taste Test Day, 85% of students voted that the USHBC's Blueberry Breakfast Bark recipe was "yummy!"

23+ million students every day. Farm to School activities provide students with fun, hands-on learning opportunities related to nutrition, agriculture, health and food in the cafeteria and the classroom. The goal is to use these activities to help healthy habits take root early and ignite excitement around nutrition beyond the classroom.

To help school nutrition professionals on their Farm to School journey, the USHBC developed a Highbush Blueberry Farm to School Playbook packed with educational resources about how blueberries are grown, nutrition guides, menu inspiration and interactive activity sheets to get kids excited about little blue dynamos. The Playbook also demonstrates how blueberries can be enjoyed year-round through fresh blueberries or cost-effective USDA Foods frozen blueberries.

To celebrate the launch of the Highbush Blueberry Farm to School Playbook, the USHBC launched a print and digital ad campaign with

Communications and Promotions

School Nutrition magazine announcing the new resource to 55,000+ school nutrition professionals. In October, USHBC partnered with the National Farm to School Network to celebrate Farm to School Month and encourage more than 11,000 member-schools to download the Playbook and celebrate blueberries in their district.

Beyond encouragement and promotion, the USHBC took it one step further and joined forces with three school districts to take their school nutrition from good to “positively bluetiful” with the help of little blue dynamos. From student taste tests to food trucks and nutrition sessions to cooking classes, the three districts saw positive student response and record-breaking breakfast and lunch participation, resulting in new blueberry items being added to school menus. Each district reported an increase in blueberry purchase intent, captured in post-event surveys.



Sebree Elementary School’s week-long blueberry event saw a 12% increase in breakfast participation as a result of the promotions



The National Farm to School Network (NFSN) partnership shared blueberry inspiration to more than 11,000 school members through blog posts, social media, sweepstakes, digital ads and more.

Global Food Technology 2018-19.

This August marks the 30-year anniversary of TJPMD work with the highbush blueberry industry. I wish to thank you for the opportunity to serve.

From the start our food technology program has worked to expand new uses of blueberries in the US and Global food industry. We document, demonstrate and communicate the good word how blueberries of all formats work in food products.

Why Food Technology: Our program works in the manufactured food products arena. This has become an international arena. Our mission is to drive blueberries into current and new uses in the food industry. This includes:

- Promoting optimal use of blueberries in current and traditional products like jams, jellies, pie fillings, muffins and others.
- Promoting new blueberry usage in new and emerging food industry categories. This includes: blueberries in variety yogurts and ice creams, cereals with ancient grains. This includes linking food processors with further processed “ingredient solutions” which fit the needs of the product specifications. This includes items like blueberry flakes, powders, purees, puree concentrates and extracts. The USA has become the go-to place for ingredient solutions and ingredient solutions in the global food industry.



How it works. Since 1988 we have stayed a steady FoodTech course to product development.

- Raise **awareness** with food processors, research and development.
- Stimulate **interest** by presenting the characteristics and benefits
- Facilitate **trial and evaluation**.
- Which leads to **acceptance**.

New Developments 2018-19:

New Category Development. USHBC FoodTech continually seeks out new usage categories for blueberry use. These are developmental markets with long-term approaches to raise awareness interest and usage. Here are some really positive developments in 2018-2019!

Food Technology and Export

Pet Foods Category. Fifteen years ago blueberry-containing pet food was not a category. Blueberry Food Tech program has promoted the use of blueberry ingredients in pet foods. We attend food industry conferences such as the Global Pet Expo and Global Pet Food Forum. We meet with suppliers and companies from all over the country and the world. Year to year these initial contacts and continual follow-up have raised awareness of blueberry ingredients that have led to more than 188 blueberry-containing products developed worldwide in 2018. In 2000 when we started there was one! Initially, this has been lower-value fiber but the new trend has been towards the use of high-value ingredients such as freeze dried and micro dry powder and flakes and purees. In the early years of blueberry pet food development, most products were from small and medium specialty pet food companies. In 2018-19 we are seeing more and more blueberry developments from major multinational pet food companies who are utilizing Real Blueberries in the product and on the pack.



(bigMilante | BigStock.com)

BY TIM WALL ON MAY 7, 2019

Top 5 fruits and vegetables in U.S. pet food 2018

While many fruits and vegetables are included in traditional kibble formulations made on extruders, other technologies have become available to the pet food ingredient industry.

Market analysts at Nielsen tabulated that pet owners in the United States spent approximately US\$33 million on pet foods with human-grade products, such as fruits and vegetables, in 2018. Nielsen reported the top five fruits and vegetables found in pet foods as measured by value sales.

1. Carrots – US\$3.42 billion
2. Beet – US\$1.85 billion
3. Ancient grains – US\$1.80 billion
4. Sweet potato – US\$1.07 billion
5. Blueberry – US\$761 million

Get Notifications



Pet Food Industry magazine reported that Nielsen Research has tabulated the value of blueberry-containing pet food products to be \$761 million USD in 2018.

In 2019, new blueberry-containing pet foods have made it to market in South Korea. This product has it all: The “Real” name and prominent declaration that this is a “human grade product.” Note the blue circle which says this product is made with real American frozen blueberries. Our Korean FoodTech Sunyong Lee began discussing blueberry ingredients with Korean pet foods five years ago and now some of the same companies he met with are launching new products.

Natural Cosmetics. It all started in Asia in the 1980s where innovative companies such as Arome Pacific in Korea and Kanebo in Japan began to integrate botanicals into consumer skincare products. Much of the ingredients used were extracts, synthetic ketones and aromas and essences. USHBC has been exploring this high value category with attendance at Asian and US cosmetic conferences and one on one meetings with companies and cosmetic chemists at conferences and industry seminars. In 2018-2019, we are seeing the “fruits” of our labor with more than 885 blueberry-identified natural skin care products introduced worldwide. The key has been the awareness, interest and trial of blueberry ingredient solutions especially. One US manufacturer has developed the very first USA made blueberry extract which has opened the door to real blueberry use. Also powders, flakes, seed oil and other unique ingredients are tested and accepted by users overseas and at home. “USA made” is a powerful message.



Here is a Vietnamese skin care innovation made with olive oil and USA made blueberry extract. Our Southeast Asian FoodTech Hana helped the company connect with the supplier and provided samples and technical assistance to fast-track product development.



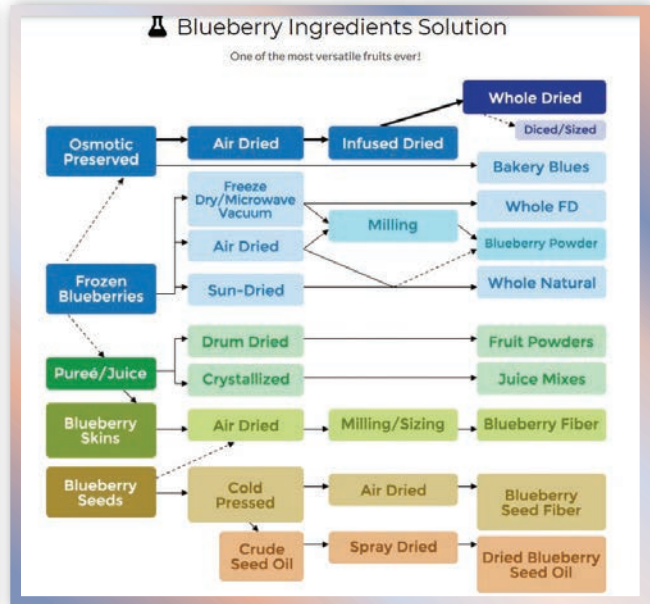
This new product developed in India now contains real blueberry extract from the USA! It is marketed all over India, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Three years ago, USHBC FoodTech met this company at the Food Ingredients India Expo and provided ingredient solution options and helped connect to the USA supplier.

Food Technology and Export

Ingredient Solutions: Food processors in the USA and abroad are looking for value added ingredient solutions. That is—they are looking for ingredients that they can easily add to their product which will make the product more valuable to customers. 2018-19 is the year of the ingredient solution. As I write I am at the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) annual meeting in New Orleans which is a gathering of the leading food companies in the world. Attending companies are not looking for raw materials, they want something with the right moisture content, size, shape, viscosity and color. Innovative manufacturers are creating further processed blueberry ingredients that fit the needs of the food processor and USHBC is helping companies connect!



The term Ingredient Solutions is the buzzword at the IFT meeting. Here, our FoodTech Hana meets with food product developers and shows the whole lineup of USA blueberry solutions.



Here is the blueberry ingredient menu on our food tech center online. Visitors can explore the many unique blueberry ingredient solutions, see interesting applications and detailed background and specifications.

Food Technology and Export

Here is how we continue to do it!

Constant Contact Continues. USHBC FoodTech has served as the link to the Global food industry. This includes major multi national companies like General Mills, Grupo Bimbo and Nestle who have huge research and development laboratories. This includes small startups with great ideas and a kitchen. This includes companies who have loyally purchased truckloads of blueberries each month for jams, jellies and other items. This includes small mom and pop bakers who loyally purchase a 30 lb case a week for making muffins and pies. USHBC FoodTech is a part of the process and has strong contacts and connections at every level of the food industry at home and abroad. We continually stay in the field with activities, connect and provide technical services, new ideas and keep the positive karma going between our industries.

Card Image	Name	Company	Title	Email	Telephone	Create Time	Note
	Boonam Kim	A OKAY F&B Co., Ltd.	Adviser	akayfb@naver.com	+821088645342	2019-05-24	Note
	Park Moo Kim	MRC Consulting	Title	mrcomp@gmail.net	010-3267-3691	2019-05-24	Note
	Heun Jin Kim	SPC SAMJIP	B2B Sales & Marketing Manager	2110130@spc.co.kr	01020420793	2019-05-24	Note
	Ricky Kim	PURE PLUS Co., LTD.	Sales Manager	rkim00@pureplus.co.kr	+821091350963	2019-05-24	Note
	Kiwon Doo-Seong	Seoul, F&B	Deputy General Manager	ksd430@seoulfb.co.kr	+821071793099	2019-05-24	Note
	Kain Hsin	KEUMKANG B&F	Overseas Sales Manager	overseas@keumkangbmf.com	+82109171318	2019-05-24	Note
	Food Technologist	N Food Co., Ltd.	Title	ca@seaycafe.co.kr	0432171772	2019-05-24	Note
	Jong-Heuk Lee	NATURE F&B CO., LTD	Sales Manager	naturefb@gmail.net	+821035964506	2019-05-24	Note
	Choi, Byoung Cheo B	HANMI F3 Co., Ltd.	Manager	choi2002@hanmi3.co.kr	821054190438	2019-05-24	Note
	Yoo Jang Uk	CHARAZONE	Assistant Manager	ywj7733@naver.com	+821027876563	2019-05-24	Note

USHBC FoodTech maintains continual contact with companies around the world.

Blueberries at your fingertips

Online Supplier List

Company Name	Address	Phone/Fax	Email	Contact	Market Scope	Website	Product Offerings
<input type="checkbox"/> 206 Farm Market	200 Route 206 Hampton, NJ 08037	(609) 867-0990	billmon@yahoo.com	William A. Monzo	US&Canada Only	206 Farm Market	Fresh
<input type="checkbox"/> A & L Farms, Inc.	12051 -144th Avenue Grand Haven, MI 49417	(616) 842-1387 (616) 842-8239	mguel@alandfarms.com	Miguel Ochoa	Export Ready	A & L Farms	Fresh, Case Frozen, Straight Pack, Puree-single strength, Juice stock
<input type="checkbox"/> Adlen Blue Ribbon Packing Co., Inc.	6583 - 109th Ave., South Haven, MI 49090	(269) 637-6740 f. (269) 637-3274	adrlouie@gmail.com	Bert Adkin		Adlen Blue Ribbon	Fresh, Straight Pack
<input type="checkbox"/> AgriCare (Farm Management Group)		+1 505 500 3977	ericzond@agricare.com	Eric Pond	Export Ready	AgriCare	Fresh, Case Frozen, Straight Pack, Freeze Dried, Puree-stock, Juice stock
<input type="checkbox"/> Altn Farms Farm	800 NE Tenney Road, Ste 110417	(503) 772-3332(503) 571-1770	altnfarm@montal.com	Sharon Baker			Fresh

Companies can connect with blueberry ingredient suppliers online.

Food Technology and Export

Face to Face Activities Work. Food industry expositions are an effective way to reach companies in a central location. In 2019, we exhibited at expositions in the USA and globally. At these events we connect companies to blueberries, answer questions and follow-up with information. We continue to engage and follow with our blog e newsletter and visits. In 2019 we are exhibiting at the International Baking Industry Exposition where bakers and bakery management from all over the world will attend. This year we exhibited at dozens different food tech expositions in the USA and abroad including five regional Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) meetings in major food industry centers, the American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) the International Bakery Exposition, and International Deli Bakery Association.



The Calendar section of the FoodTech Info Center informs industry of important activities including expositions, trade missions and other activities.



Gulfood is a big deal for market development in the Middle East. Here the USDA-FAS Administrator spends time at the USHBC booth learning about the blueberry success story in the Persian Gulf where interest and sales have soared.



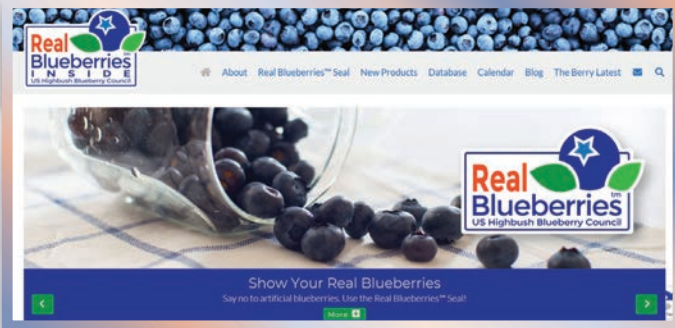
Here is the result of five-10 hr days at the Gulfood Exposition in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) In 2019, we saw more and more interest from the “other” countries in the Gulf especially Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Oman and others. Where fresh has been the main interest, we are now connected with food industries in the region who are producing jams, jellies and fruit preparations,

		Handling based on prior 4 annual market year totals					2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Fresh blueberries, cultivated	Share	Avg	ANN: Jan-Dec	ANN	ANN	ANN	ANN	ANN	ANN	Mar YTD	
Canada	84.3%	82,018		78,435	77,164	81,240	91,238	2,798			
United Kingdom	3.0%	2,318		2,838	5,800	2,507	446				
Japan	2.8%	2,463		3,874	2,179	1,866	1,932	136			
Korea, South	2.5%	2,417		2,822	877	3,972	2,096	144			
Hong Kong	1.4%	1,356		2,488	1,781	734	419	14			
Other Countries				7,991	4,557	4,463	7,232	876			
Singapore	1.4%	1,082		2,531	892	544	1,444				
United Arab Emirates	1.3%	1,159		997	620	1,241	1,776	501			
Taiwan	1.3%	1,237		2,106	808	885	1,149				
Mexico	0.6%	496		142	545	840	950				
Australia	0.4%	413		292	248	493	620	80			

Fresh shipment values of fresh blueberries to the Middle East have risen steadily with raised awareness and interest generated by USHBC activities such as Gulfood. Above is a chart showing value of fresh USA blueberries to the top markets in the world. Note that UAE has slipped into the top ten!

Food Technology and Export

Creating a FoodTech Legacy. Over the past three decades, we have learned a lot about blueberries. This year I am distilling this knowledge into a blueberry library stored at: www.blueberrytech.org. This includes a blog with lots of interesting information from the field, technical information, and new products on display.



Tom Payne continually publishes knowledge gained over 30 years of service to the USHBC.



Tom's Blog shows lots of interesting blueberry topics especially new products.

Sampling. We work with grants from the USDA-FAS to purchase and deliver samples of frozen and dried blueberries to export countries such as India, Vietnam, Philippines and Colombia. The product is delivered to companies for familiarization and product development. We supplement the delivery with technical assistance from our overseas FoodTechs. In each sampling program one container has led to more. We are seeing new products developed with the samples provided by USHBC! Our QSP program in India has resulted in continual imports of frozen blueberries into India. With this, manufacturer can produce fruit preps, fillings and other items. In 2018, more than \$850,000 of dried blueberries and \$250,000 of frozen blueberries were shipped to India. Prior to USHBC FoodTech activities ten years ago --there were zero. A similar sampling activity was implemented in Vietnam in 2018 and this has resulted in regular shipments of frozen blueberries to this rapidly rising market.



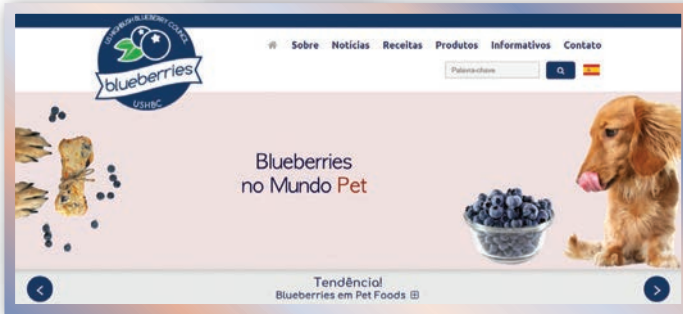
Frozen samples sent to Vietnam are used for product development and sampling like this event in Hanoi which featured muffins produced by a local bakery chain with USA frozen blueberries.



India FoodTech Raj Kapoor visits Sri Lankan ice cream company to present frozen and dried blueberry concepts.

Food Technology and Export

Global FoodTech Presence. We have a crack team of technical experts working in the field as ambassadors of highbush blueberries in the food industry. This includes individuals with advanced degrees in food science and technology and years of experience in product development. They visit importers, distributors and current and potential end users each month. In the last year, more contacts have been made in the USA and around the world. We have an ongoing blueberry food tech presence on the internet with a newly renovated Blueberrytech.org site.



FoodTech info center in Latin America brings new blueberry usage trends to life!



Vietnam FoodTech Info center serves as information hub for connecting with manufacturers all over the region.

Spreading the Blueberry FoodTech Message. USHBC FoodTech casts a wide net to connect with the food industry through trade magazines, publications and ads. Our message weaves information on blueberry health, ingredient solutions and pertinence to major trends that resonate with blueberries including “super fruits,” ancient grains, new ingredient solutions, Real Blueberries, unique products from home and abroad and other messages. We continually contact food industry publications such as Food Technology, and others and propose blueberry articles. In 2018-19 this has resulted in publications in magazines, newsletters and online publications.



Beverage article on blueberry ingredient solutions.



Article in Dairy publication shows how we weave our messages into special issues and feature stories.

Food Technology and Export

Approaching New Markets. USHBC FoodTech continues to seek new markets for the future abroad. In 2018-19 we conducted market assessments in Vietnam and the Philippines where we conducted interviews with companies including importers, distributors and manufacturers. This information indicated potential for blueberry ingredients in specific categories and channels and the road-map has led to implementation of market development activities. In 2019, we are conducting assessments in Myanmar (formerly Burma) and South Africa. Sampling activities are planned in the Russian Far East and Israel for frozen and canned blueberries. We have also conducted our first activities in Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica where local food industries are rising!



Blueberry Chef demo and tasting in Bogota Colombia.



Myanmar Celebrity chef demonstrates blueberry baking concepts.

It has been a wonderful 30 years working with you. First with NABC and now USHBC. You will continue to see an aggressive in the field and enthusiastic FoodTech approach in the USA and abroad. Thank you.

USHBC Awarded Record Amount of Federal Grant Funding to Develop Export Markets

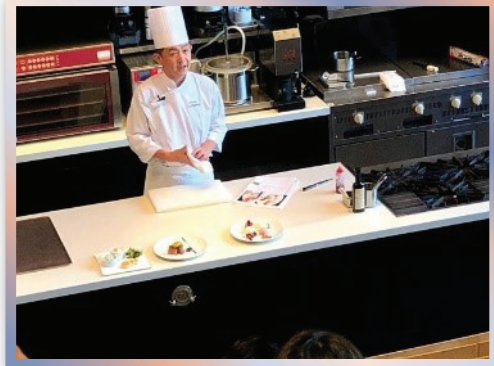
As blueberry production expands throughout the world, mostly from North and South America and Asia (China), the U.S. industry will continue to face a wave of supply that threatens to disrupt the current market balance if unmatched by demand. To stabilize pricing and ensure sustainable profitability, the U.S. highbush blueberry industry must pursue export markets and increase the share of production shipped out of the North American market. USHBC's Export Subcommittee supports industry efforts to promote U.S. highbush blueberries in targeted export markets, conduct research and provide industry resources, and leverage external funds where available.

USHBC's allocation of federal grant funds reached a record high of \$842,494 in 2018, representing a 125% increase from 2015 (\$375,000). The Council's diverse utilization of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Trade Programs, including the Market Access Program (MAP), Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program, Quality Samples Program (QSP) and Emerging Markets Program (EMP) has enabled a massive expansion of the Council's export market development activities – extending beyond consumer marketing activities to include pest and disease research, technical assistance and feasibility studies for frozen and further processed highbush blueberries in emerging markets.

In 2019, USHBC is expected to be awarded more than \$1.83 million in USDA FAS Trade Program funds, including \$259,953 from the Agricultural Trade Promotion (ATP) Program. The ATP program was created in 2018 to help U.S. agricultural industries explore new export markets and mitigate the adverse effects of other countries' tariff and non-tariff barriers. The Council will utilize the ATP funds to conduct additional consumer outreach activities in Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia and Vietnam.

To establish a clear prioritization of efforts and maximize impact of available resources, USHBC completed a comprehensive global assessment of markets and opportunities in July 2018. The assessment included markets throughout North and Southeast Asia, North and South America, Europe and the Middle East. Topics included phytosanitary and sanitary barriers to trade, tariffs, maximum residue levels and testing practices, free trade agreements, supply chain characteristics, cold chain, blueberry consumption trends, retail merchandising trends, and competitive threats.

USHBC then developed an online database (<https://exportdatabase.ushbc.org/>) to share data and analysis from the assessment with the industry. An annual content update is underway in 2019, and compliance and regulatory information will be updated as changes occur. This database is designed to serve as a primary export resource for U.S. highbush blueberry growers and packers to increase exports to emerging and established markets around the world.



U.S. highbush blueberries were included in a USDA FAS Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) seminar in Japan, titled, “U.S. Food Ingredients for Aging Population” in August 2019.

Consumer Export Program and FAS Grant Funds

Based on the assessment's findings, USHBC's Export Subcommittee decided to continue to invest market development resources in established markets like Japan and South Korea, the top two export markets for fresh and frozen blueberries outside of Canada. However, more in-depth market research was completed in each country to understand consumer purchasing habits and decision making at the point of sale. The research suggested USHBC explore more targeted health messaging to the aging population in Japan, and increase consumer awareness of the various uses of frozen blueberries in South Korea, a growing sector in the market since the tariff zeroed out.

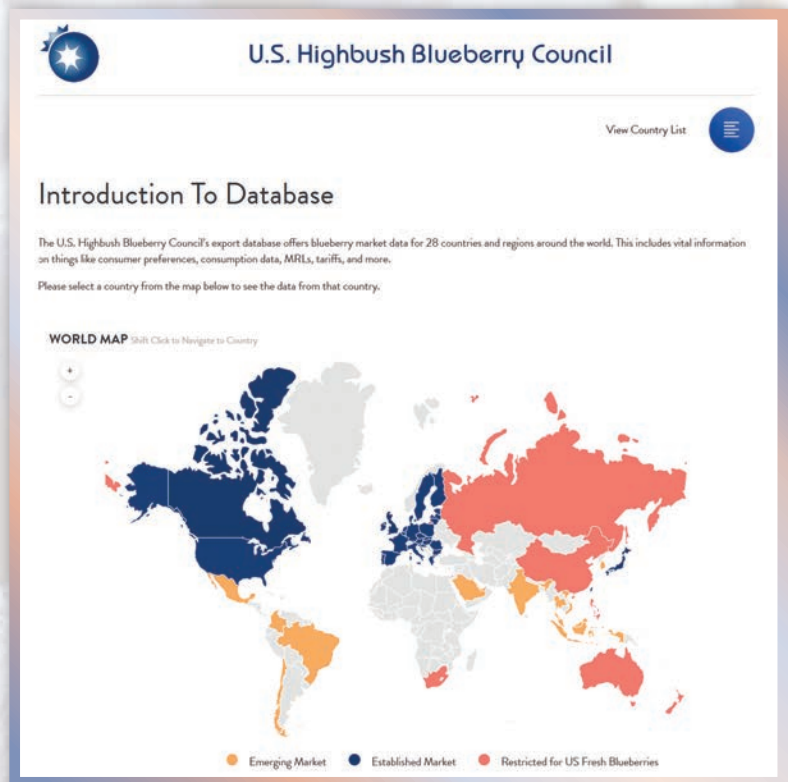
The assessment also highlighted opportunities in emerging markets throughout Southeast Asia. Although other global producers are also targeting the region, buyers in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan and newly opened Vietnam perceive the United States as a reliable and consistent source of fresh and frozen highbush blueberries. In 2019, USHBC allocated MAP, ATP and industry matching funds to establish in-country support

in each market, and conduct targeted retail promotions and public relations activities. Retail activities aimed to move beyond single department promotions (such as fresh blueberries in produce) and include multiple departments (such as produce, bakery, grocery and frozen food), an offer unique from the U.S. blueberry industry.

In 2018, USHBC secured a second year of funding from the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program to support the joint research efforts of USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Michigan State University (MSU) to explore alternative treatments for blueberry maggot, a necessary step in opening markets like Australia and New Zealand. A third year of funding was recently approved in 2019. USHBC also submitted a 2019 TASC proposal to establish permanent import tolerances for at least 11 chemicals in South Korea, which recently converted to a positive maximum residue level (MRL) tolerance system. A funding decision is expected by June 2019.

In addition to consumer export promotion activities, the USDA FAS trade programs also support USHBC's international food technology program. In 2018, QSP funds were utilized to ship processed highbush blueberries to Eastern India and Vietnam. In early 2019, dried highbush blueberry samples were shipped to Colombia for new product development research and testing. EMP projects exploring opportunities for processed highbush blueberries in Vietnam and the Philippines were completed, and assessments are available at: <https://ushbc.org/export/>. Looking ahead to 2019, USHBC will use QSP funds to ship samples to Israel and Russia, and conduct EMP market assessments for processed highbush blueberries in Myanmar and South Africa.

Although USHBC continues to increase its utilization of external funding, and demand and preference for U.S. highbush blueberries is growing overseas, the industry must utilize available resources to expand its share of production exported offshore. In 2019 and beyond, USHBC will continue to open new markets and increase industry awareness and familiarity with export protocols and guidelines.



Homepage of the USHBC Export Database, available at <https://exportdatabase.ushbc.org>

Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2018 and 2017

Assets

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Current Assets:		
Cash	\$7,436,995	\$7,381,986
Accounts receivable	1,136,511	770,160
Promotional materials	45,430	40,562
Prepaid expenses	115,025	129,745
Total current assets	8,733,961	8,322,453
Equipment, net	-	-
Total assets	\$8,773,961	\$8,322,453

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$974,206	\$1,132,540
Health research contract obligations	1,427,194	1,146,463
Deferred crop assessments	<u>3,930,971</u>	<u>3,900,177</u>
Total Liabilities	6,332,371	6,179,180
Net assets: without donor restrictions	<u>2,401,590</u>	<u>2,143,273</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$8,733,961	\$8,322,453

Statement of Activities

For the Years Ended December 31, 2017 and 2018

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Revenue:		
Domestic crop assessments	\$3,968,438	\$4,771,906
Foreign crop assessments	4,229,333	3,577,559
Grant revenue	911,805	882,300
Gains from contract expirations	156,628	-
Other revenue	34,102	14,376
Total revenue	9,300,306	9,246,141
Expenses:		
Market promotion and publicity	6,282,294	5,955,333
Research	1,169,639	1,161,024
Industry relations	153,213	100,112
Food safety	69,445	551,849
USHBC program fees	208,082	208,440
General and administrative	<u>1,159,316</u>	<u>966,013</u>
Total expenses	9,041,989	8,942,771
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	258,317	303,370
Net assets without donor restrictions, beginning of year	2,143,273	1,839,903
Net assets without donor restrictions, end of year	\$2,401,590	\$2,143,273

The Corporate Social Responsibility Statement of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

Members of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) believe in several core values related to the responsible stewardship of the resources with which we are entrusted. In order to fulfill our responsibilities in accordance with these values we will:

- Promote sustainable practices in agriculture, balancing the needs of consumers with the needs of the land and the industry.
- Contribute to an important agricultural economy that must be self-supporting and profitable.
- Recognize the interdependence of our growing, handling and marketing activities with customers, regulators, neighbors, suppliers, employees and others who support and permit our work.
- Enjoy and foster diversity in all its positive forms, from the crops we grow to the membership in our blueberry community.
- Encourage the sharing of information to provide participants in the industry and our consumers the knowledge they need to make good choices about all aspects of their enjoyment of blueberries.
- Embrace the challenge of promoting the goodness of blueberries to all corners of the earth and to be the impetus that contributes to the health and well-being of consumers and creates opportunity for fellow industry members.

The USHBC Code of Ethics

As members of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, we acknowledge our responsibility to our industry, its customers, the Council and our fellow humans to exhibit the highest standards of business conduct. We therefore encourage our industry members to:

- Be committed to adherence to laws, practices and regulations which apply to the areas where we conduct business.
- At a minimum, follow the standards and practices required by law and regulation for growing, harvesting, processing and handling blueberries for the protection and health of our employees and those who eat our great product.
- Encourage that hours worked each day, and days worked each week, shall not exceed legal limitations, that unsafe workplace practices not be tolerated and that employees be trained in safe practices.
- Provide impartial and unprejudiced treatment to employees in all sectors of the industry.
- Conduct all our business practices with honesty, fair dealing and in conformance with high ethical standards and use only legal and ethical means in all business activities following all applicable laws and operating in ways that encourage trust among our members, their customers and other stakeholders.
- Provide the means to help our industry grow in socially appropriate and ecologically responsible ways throughout the entire supply chain.
- Be strongly committed to the strict adherence to all environmental rules, regulations and standards that are imposed by local, state and national government authorities.
- Hold one another to the highest levels of integrity and be a good corporate citizen in every community and locality where we grow. Encourage blueberry growers to become involved in the life of their communities by participating in and sponsoring activities that result in community betterment.
- Collaborate with industry members, researchers and others to benefit the responsible growth of the blueberry industry.
- Be honest and fair in our promotion of blueberries and scrupulously accurate in our representation of the benefits of eating blueberries.
- Support our Council, and the industry at large, by debating, crafting and promoting changes that will create opportunity for involvement in the industry.
- Educate members about good management practices that contribute to further development of the industry's growing, handling, marketing, health, safety, public education and other important disciplines.

USHBC OFFICE STAFF



USHBC OFFICE STAFF

Vicki De Bruin, Marketing Manager, Mandy Boarman, Administrative Assistant, Julie Fogarty, Assistant Manager, Mark Villata, Executive Director, Rick Ruckman, Compliance & Data Coordinator and Mary Nezbeth, Office Manager

