

Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine



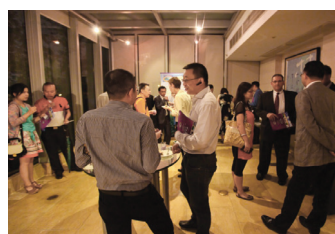
Activities, Issues, and News—Fall 2012

WBANA collaborates with Governor's office to Promote Maine Wild Blueberries in China

Patricia Kontur, representative for the Wild Blueberry Association of North America export program, traveled to Shanghai, China, in September to coordinate a Wild Blueberry nutrition seminar with special guest Maine Governor Paul LePage. Representatives of the Chinese business community attended the Wild Blueberry Association Nutrition Seminar that was conducted in conjunction with the first ever trade mission led by a Maine governor to mainland China.

"Blueberries are a popular ingredient and whole food in China, and we know there are tremendous additional opportunities for Wild Blueberries in both consumer and food ingredient markets," notes David Bell, executive director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine. "This reception and seminar is an opportunity for us to share the unique story of Wild Blueberries and develop relationships with key business leaders." After opening trade mission remarks from Governor LePage, members of the Wild Blueberry delegation presented information on the many characteristics that make Wild Blueberries attractive to the Chinese market.

Dr. Vivian Chi-Hua Wu, associate professor of microbiology and food safety at the University of Maine, presented the unique nutritional and



Dr. Vivian Wu (top) of the University of Maine spoke at the Wild Blueberry Association Nutrition Seminar in Shanghai. After the seminar, participants gathered for a reception (above), where cheesecake with wild blueberries (right) was featured.



health benefits associated with Wild Blueberries. The health benefits of eating Wild Blueberries are supported by an increasing body of research relating to slowing memory loss, reducing risk factors for diabetes and heart disease, preserving eye health and more. Patricia Kontur, program director at the Wild Blueberry Association, spoke about the incredible versatility of Wild Blueberries as an ingredient in a wide variety of products, and, because of state-of-the-art processing plants in Maine, the ability for frozen fresh Wild Blueberries to be delivered

to Chinese markets with the quality of the fruit and nutrient value intact. Governor Paul LePage's remarks focused on the value of Maine's agricultural production and the importance and benefit of developing business relationships between Maine and China. The Maine International Trade Center coordinated the China mission that took Maine furniture, export, cordage and seafood and lobster companies to Hong Kong and Shanghai to enhance business and educational potential between the Dirigo state and China. 🌍

Special points of interest:

- * Check out www.wildblueberries.com

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Governor Paul LePage spoke about the value of Maine's agricultural production and developing business relationships between Maine and China at the Wild Blueberry Association Nutrition Seminar in Shanghai.

Eastern States Exposition Wrap Up – The Big E 2012

The Eastern States Exposition attendance record was broken again in 2012 as the gate hit over 1.36 million people during the 17 day fair. In all, there were 6 record breaking attendance days during the 2012 fair. The Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine wrapped up another record during the Big E by selling over 15,000 wild blueberry desserts to the crowd – almost 1000 a day! Wild Blueberry pies were the favorite at the Fair with about 9,500 whole pie and pie slices with ice cream being consumed by fairgoers. The cooperative weather gave a boost to attendance as rainy days were few. We

also had a great turnout from our volunteer crew. We appreciate growers taking time out to come to the Fair and volunteer in the information booth. Growers talk to people about the special Maine wild blueberry and get a lot of positive feedback from people from all over the country. Adults consistently consume frozen wild blueberry samples while saying “have to get my antioxidants for today,” while kids say “yum!” The second consistent comment is “where can I buy Maine Wild Blueberries?” Products displayed in the West Springfield, Mass. area groceries show the wide-ranging availability

of nutritious and tasty wild blueberries. Fairgoers watched the wonderful www.wildblueberries.com videos on display and were eager to purchase the wild blueberry plants brought from the University of Maine's Blueberry Hill Farm Research Station. Once again the Wild Blueberry information and food booth displays presented a professional design and a colorful exhibit in the Maine Building. As always we thank those who made 2012 such a successful year! We invite experienced and novice volunteers to join us at the Big E in the Fall of 2013. Look for a notice to be distributed in the spring of 2013! 🍷

Wild Blueberries and Small fruits obtain Specialty Crop IPM Research Funds

The Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine, the Maine Small Vegetable and Fruit Growers Association and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association collaborated with University of Maine Cooperative Extension and research faculty

to submit an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) proposal for the 2012 Specialty Crop Block Grant program. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) coordinates this competitive grant program on

behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Agriculture Marketing Service. This collaborative grant application received the highest scoring in the 2012 round of USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants.

The IPM proposal is to conduct research on the Spotted Wing Drosophila, an invasive species first seen in Maine in the fall of 2011. This destructive pest infests small soft fruits such as wild blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries, and is known to reproduce exponentially while in soft fruit and berry crops. Drs. Frank Drummond, David Handley, and James Dill will collaborate on two objectives; *Evaluate preliminary trap and bait method for early SWD detection (crop year 1 - 2013)*

- Conduct "side by side" comparisons of a range of trap designs and baits that have been developed throughout the U.S. and by Dr. Dill in Maine.
- Determine the relationship between first and subsequent SWD trap captures and occurrence and severity of fruit damage in raspberries, strawberries; highbush, and wild blueberry.

Begin to develop the IPM program for SWD (18 months May 2013-September 2014) by

researching and evaluating;

- Effective insecticides for SWD management and trap thresholds
- Field edge or perimeter insecticide application strategy
- Crop sanitation tactics
- Mass trapping of adult SWD
- Netting of small plantings

ACF Commissioner Walt Whitcomb made IPM one of the priority areas for state coordinated USDA Specialty Crop Block grants. This past spring Wild Blueberry Commission staff worked closely with Dr. Frank Drummond and partner organizations, along with Dr. David Yarborough of the Wild Blueberry Research and Extension team at the University of Maine to submit two IPM proposals, one on resistant weed management and the other on the collaborative Integrated Pest Management program for control of the SWD. Dr. Drummond, in turn worked with IPM faculty researchers, Drs. James Dill and David

Handley to complete the IPM proposal. Though each of the two IPM proposals was highly ranked by the Dept. of Ag Block Grant Committee, and approximately \$173,000 was requested, just over \$79,000 was allotted for both projects. The result of the reduction in project funding is that the objectives, and timeline were curtailed.

Over the last year the Advisory Committee and Commission have been working with Wild Blueberry researchers at UMaine to continue to pursue competitive grants; however, many of these grants are only a couple of years in duration and often 4-6 years of IPM research is necessary to prove a practice works consistently. The Commission will continue to work with the UMaine Wild Blueberry Research and Extension team on conducting much needed research and seeking additional avenues for funding IPM. 🌱

Wild Blueberry Reading Book Committee seeks photos and volunteers

The Wild Blueberry Reading book for elementary students grades pre-kindergarten to 4 is now being developed. The Wild Blueberry Commission Public Education Committee is working in partnership with Maine Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) to expand student knowledge about wild blueberries and agricultural

business in Maine. We are now collecting information and developing the themes for the reading book so now is the time to contact Patricia Kontur at the Wild Blueberry Commission if you have photos that show the family members managing and harvesting wild blueberries or if you are interested in participating on

the project. Subjects that are suited for younger children will be used to develop this educational tool that is expected to be printed later in 2013. This book supplements the Wild Blueberry Lesson Kit now in use by educators for grades 4 through 6. 🌱

Opportunity for Wild Blueberry Companies to Exhibit at San Francisco Trade Show

The Maine International Trade Center (MITC) has purchased booth space at the Winter Fancy Food Show in San Francisco. This trade show is

for specialty food and value-added companies. Travel and set up for the show is January 18 and 19 and the show is January 20 to 22nd. Funding

from the Small Business Administration has allowed them to keep participation

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Wild Blueberry Lesson Kit modules are available online at Maine Ag in the Classroom website at; www.TeachMEFoodandFarms.org The lessons are searchable by Maine Learning Results and the Common Core Standards.

costs to \$1,500 per company for MITC members, and \$1750 for non-members. Most associated exhibit costs would be covered and in addition, there is a \$500 travel grant available for MITC members to apply towards airfare, meals, and hotel expenses. MITC

membership is \$200 annually for companies with 1 to 3 employees and those with 4-25 employees pay \$400 in dues annually. MITC will bring up to four Maine companies to the show. You must register soon to take advantage of this opportunity. Contact Jeff

Bennett at Maine International Trade Center – jbennett@mitc.com or call (207) 553-7709. Link to the trade show online at:
<http://www.specialtyfood.com/fancy-food-show/winter-fancy-food-show/> 🍷

