

Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

Activities, Issues, and News—Spring 2014



Special points of interest:

- * Check out the BetterBlueberry at www.wildblueberries.com pick taste! pick health! pick Wild!

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America launches new brand identity and logo

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America has just launched a new mark as part of its consumer focused marketing campaign to more clearly differentiate Wild Blueberries from regular cultivated blueberries. Last spring we conducted consumer research indicating that the majority of blueberry lovers are still not aware that there are two types of blueberries to choose from. The previous mark identified Wild Blueberries as the premium blueberry and an antioxidant star. The new mark focuses on a strong call to “Pick Wild” blueberries. This new simplified logo is part of a robust campaign using PR and influencer efforts combined with numerous online and trade initiatives to educate U.S. Blueberry lovers to “Pick Wild.”

The Wild Blueberry



Association has dramatically increased our online presence, tripling website visits, quadrupling our Facebook community and growing our base of influencers to help us spread the word about Wild Blueberries. We are launching the new wildblueberries.com website by the end of the month and participating in numerous trade events with all new promotional materials

over the summer and into the fall to keep wild blueberries at the top of mind with the ingredient trade and the health and nutrition groups.

Wild Blueberries, with more intense blueberry taste and 2X the antioxidants of regular blueberries, are on a mission to increase demand for our Wild slice of the premium blueberry market. If you like blueberries, you’ll love Wild Blueberries! 🍷

From Roy Allen II, Chair of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

I am writing to inform you that David K. Bell, Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine has resigned his position effective May 23, 2014. We are sorry to see Dave leave his role with the Commission, but happy that he will remain involved in our industry as he has accepted the General Manager position at Cherryfield Foods, Inc.

Dave worked tirelessly in the public policy arena

to support our industry and protect the natural resource sector in Maine. One of his many accomplishments was his work with the University of Maine, Orono and Cooperative Extension that led to a much needed rebuilding of the Blueberry Hill Farm lab and meeting facility. We are grateful for Dave’s leadership in confronting and resolving policy issues and challenges in our industry over the years.

Dave’s effort on behalf of the Commission to advance the wild blueberry research and development program is exceptional. His participation at the state and national level to advocate for wild blueberry health research and communicate the nutritional value and benefit of wild blueberries has led to increasing consumer demand for our product. The wild blueberry

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From Roy Allen II

industry has also received significant beneficial media coverage both domestically and

internationally due to Dave's tireless work.

For almost two decades, Dave has helped grow the wild blueberry industry. His time and commitment is deeply

appreciated. On behalf of the Commission, we wish Dave well in his new endeavors and will enjoy working with him in his new role in the wild blueberry industry. 🍷

Commission will exhibit at School Nutrition Association Annual Conference in Boston July 2014

Over the last 20 years, Maine Wild Blueberry growers of all sizes have expressed interest in seeing Wild Blueberries included in the USDA school lunch program. Introducing a healthy fruit like Wild Blueberries to young consumers goes hand in hand with revised USDA Dietary Guidelines' goal to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. Likewise, requirements for the school lunch program are now increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables served to students. Overcoming barriers to schools' use and purchase of wild blueberries is a key to getting more product into school lunches and breakfasts across the country. Because 80% of the food for their programs is purchased at market prices, schools are price sensitive and pressed by limited budgets. Berries are

still a higher priced fruit than a product such as applesauce, that is shelf stable and easy to add to a school meal. Including wild blueberries into an applesauce for example, would mean that the Commission and processors would need to work with counterpart fruit associations that sell into the school lunch program. Finally, school lunch programs do not cook from scratch as they may have 30 or so years ago and institutional recipes will need to be developed to include IQF berries into menus.

At a recent meeting with USDA- Agricultural Marketing Service, the wild blueberry industry was encouraged to rethink the approach to getting IQF wild blueberries included in school meals. Because increasing fruits into school menus is being phased in during the 2014-15 school year across the

country, the time is right to exhibit at the School Nutrition Association Annual Conference to both generate interest and awareness of school dietitians in Wild Blueberries and for the industry to learn how schools' food services operate. The School Nutrition Association Annual Conference would also be an opportunity to network with food processors making product for school meals and look for opportunities to incorporate Wild Blueberries into food items provided to schools. The annual conference is July 13-16, 2014 in Boston and it is a natural fit for the Wild Blueberry Commission to exhibit at the show and start with a regional focus.

The Wild Blueberry Commission will exhibit at this show and explore the potential for including IQF wild blueberries in school lunches. 🍷

New requirements for the 2014-2015 school lunch program are now increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables served to students.

Wild Blueberry Commission works with UMaine Cooperative Extension to host Trade Show

The UMaine Cooperative Extension Blueberry Hill Farm Field Day on Wednesday, July 16th, 2014 will feature a Wild Blueberry Farm Trade Show for the third year. UMaine educational sessions including crop discussions, research talks and in field demonstrations will be on the agenda along with the trade show. The

Farm Trade Show exhibitors represent businesses that sell products to wild blueberry growers and bring their products and knowledge to interested farmers at the Field Day. A free luncheon provided to more than 200 people during the Field Day, is organized and managed by the Blueberry Hill Farm

and professional and student research crew who take time out of their daily work schedule to prepare a barbeque luncheon for wild blueberry growers and other guests. Networking and educational opportunities are plentiful during the full day schedule.

Continued Wild Blueberry Commission

It continues to be exciting times for growers who have seen the Wild Blueberry become known as an antioxidant Superfruit! over the last 15 plus years. The right investments in the crop have produced valuable and sustainable gains for Maine growers. Integrated Pest Management and UMaine Wild Blueberry research have helped growers to increase the 5 year average of wild blueberry production by 25%, similarly the 5 year value of

wild blueberry production has increased by 23%.

Equipment, Product, and Service companies are invited to exhibit at this event for the Maine Wild Blueberry business. The Wild Blueberry Farm Trade Show will take place from 9am to 4pm during the annual University of Maine Cooperative Extension Wild Blueberry Field Day on July 16, 2014 at Blueberry Hill Farm in Jonesboro, Maine. We want to thank in advance our sponsors of the Wild Blueberry Field Day events — BioBest USA, Inc., and Doug Bragg Enterprises, Ltd. Additional sponsorships

are available and exhibitors are welcome to support the 2014 Wild Blueberry Field Day and Farm Trade Show.

We expect attendance of over 200 farmers and guests at this annual event and trade show. There will be a limited number of outdoor spaces available at the show and vendors must pre-register to get a booth. Each registration will include a vendor company listing in the program, and lunch is free for all who attend. Please call Nancy England at 581-1475 or email England@maine.edu if you would like to register as a sponsor or a vendor. 🌱

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Dr. David Yarborough presenting information to growers at the Field Day and Trade Show at Blueberry Hill Farm, Jonesboro, Maine

Grower volunteers needed for Public Education booth at the Big E

Every year at the 17 day Big E Exposition in West Springfield, Mass., we need 15 to 20 people from the wild blueberry business to volunteer for the Wild Blueberry Commission's public education booth. We would again like to invite growers to consider

attending and representing the industry during the Fair in the fall. We get a lot of positive feedback from consumers who come from all over the country but most often hail from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. Volunteers provide answers to dozens of

questions and comments about the Maine wild blueberry crop and industry and distribute frozen wild blueberry samples to fairgoers. Most volunteers attend the fair for two or three days, working at the

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Continued Big E Volunteers

information booth for about 6 hours, which leaves time to attend a variety of fair activities. Volunteer expenses at the fair are paid by the Commission.

There are more wild

blueberry products available for display than ever and the crop production and management graphic at the public education booth shows attendees the unique crop cycle of the Maine wild blueberry. Attention-grabbing videos from the wildblueberries.com

website are on display and eager fairgoers request to taste samples of IQF wild blueberries! The Wild Blueberry public education and foodservice booth showcase a professional design and present a “wild” exhibit in the Maine Building. Please join us at the Big E in the Fall of 2014! 🍷

NRCS Program Grants – USDA-NRCS announcement by Elaine Tremble

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the application deadline dates for two of its conservation programs—the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Agricultural Management Assistance Program. The Fiscal Year 2015 application deadline for both of these programs is August 15, 2014.

Agricultural producers and foresters are encouraged to sign up now for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides financial and technical assistance to address varying natural resource priorities. The Fiscal Year 2015 funding consideration application deadline for most EQIP fund pool categories will be August 15, 2014. This does not include the EQIP National Water Quality Initiative and Conservation Innovation Grants. These deadlines are yet to be determined.

The August 15, 2014 deadline for 2015 funding consideration is for both

applications for EQIP local Field Office fund pool categories (such as animal waste, cropland, forestry, seasonal high tunnels, pasture, and wildlife) and the statewide fund pool categories (Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, Tribal Projects, Water Conservation/Irrigation, Aquatic Organism Passage Projects, Conservation Activity Plans, On-Farm Energy and Organic). The August 15, 2014 sign-up deadline is an extension to the previously posted July 1, 2014 deadline for the EQIP local Field Office fund pool, or “general” categories.

Agricultural producers are also encouraged to sign up now for the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA), which also has a Fiscal Year 2015 funding consideration application deadline of August 15, 2014. AMA assists agricultural producers to manage risk and voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating

conservation practices into their farming operations. For 2015, Maine NRCS will again be offering financial assistance for irrigation systems and introducing an opportunity for funding deer exclusion fencing for orchards through the AMA program.

There is a continuous, year-round sign-up for these two programs, but applications submitted by August 15, 2014 will be considered for funding in Fiscal Year 2015. Proposals submitted after that date will be held for Fiscal Year 2016 funding consideration.

Interested landowners should visit their local NRCS office located at the USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. USDA Service Centers are listed online at <http://offices.usda.gov>, or in the telephone book under United States Government, Agriculture Department.

For more information on EQIP and AMA, please visit <http://www.me.nrcs.usda.gov>.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. 🍷

**Fiscal year 2015
application deadline
for Environmental Quality
Incentives Program and
Agricultural Management
Assistance Program funds
is August 15, 2014.
Please visit
www.me.nrcs.usda.gov
for more information.**
