

Wild Blueberry Crop Prospects 2014

Maine- *David Yarborough, University of Maine*

The blueberry plants in Maine had a long fall but a cold winter that extended into March, so plants were delayed in their development and pollination occurred later than normal. We did observe some winter injury and there were scattered frosts, but not much damage occurred. Despite the delay we had a large bloom so there were plenty of blossoms, providing the potential for a large crop. We had very few infection periods for mummyberry disease so most growers were able to protect their plants with just one fungicide application. There was little *Botrytis* blossom blight observed this year. We had poor conditions at the beginning of pollination, so some fields in the mid-coast had poor pollination but pollination conditions improved in early June when most of the crop was in bloom, so set was very good in the coastal Downeast fields. Tony Jadzack's estimate for bees contracted to pollinate wild blueberries is 75 to 80 thousand hives, which continues the trend of a "new" record number of hives used to pollinate Maine's blueberry crop. In Jonesboro, we received 4.78, 3.27 and 3.39 inches of rain in April, May and June respectively and had 2.88 inches at the beginning of July with hurricane Arthur, so moisture has been more than adequate which has provided for both good blueberry and weed growth. Crop progress is still delayed but could catch up with warmer temperatures and so if we continue to get adequate moisture for the remainder of the summer, the crop in Maine could be above average at 90 to 95 million pounds.

Quebec- *Sam Cote, Les Bleuets Savage Du Quebec*

In most area in Quebec we had good snow coverage over the winter. Our spring was cold and cloudy and it took longer than usual to melt all the snow. We did not notice any winter injury. Pollination was on time, but unfortunately some bee of the keepers had a rough winter and in some areas they lost up to 80% of their bee hives. Since many growers received less bee hives than ordered, more leaf cutter bees and bumble bees were used. The good news is we had favorable temperatures for the pollination period. We did not notice any frost during bloom or disease. As up today July 1, we need some water, as we have had several warm days in a row without any rain, and we are entering a dry period. If we get good weather, we believe that Quebec could have 65 - 70 million pounds of wild blueberries which includes both the forest and managed fields.

Nova Scotia – Peter Burgess, Perennia

Nova Scotia had a cold winter and a delayed start to the growing season compared to the last couple of years. Some winter damage is evident but it is relatively minor. It was cold and wet until early May but conditions were relatively dry through the Monilinia season. The weather was dry and sunny through bloom for the bulk of the province with low *Botrytis* pressure. There were three separate frost events in mid-bloom that did take some yield in a few areas but again overall it appears to be minor. Nova Scotia again brought in 4000+ hives from Ontario through the import permit program. Domestically Nova Scotia had lower winter bee losses, but challenges bringing in packages resulted in some lower hive numbers for pollination. The use of bumble bee quads is also increasing. There were lots of native pollinators throughout the province this year. Nova Scotia looks to have a good to very good fruit set and yields should be above 40 million pounds. The biggest concern for growers as we head into harvest is SWD. There is a continued effort among growers and researchers to monitor for this pest in 2014.

New Brunswick Crop – Mike Melanson, New Brunswick DAAF

Generally, winter injury was minimal in most fields although dead tips of the plant were observed during bloom, either from winter or the cold spring as bud development occurred. Bud development was two weeks later compared to the past few years. A few infection periods for *Monilinia* blight occurred, and required growers to apply two applications of fungicide. *Botrytis* blight was notice in some fields; however, fields were a fungicide was applied in early bloom had very little symptoms. There was a few frost period during bloom, but damage was minimal. In most fields, bloom was good to very good bloom, except for fields were there was a lot of damage from tip midge or sucking bugs. In the southern region, early bloom weather was poor, but as the season progressed, the weather for pollination improved. Generally, the weather conditions were very good in the Northeast, where the bulk of the production is established. Rainfall this year has been good in all regions. At this time, the crop is still delayed, but with some warm temperatures over the next few weeks, the crop maturity should catch up. Provided that adequate rainfall occurs over the next month, the crop in NB should be good, likely matching or surpassing the recent crops of 44-46 million pounds of the past few years.

PEI Crop – Chris Jordan, PEI DAF

The 2014 crop season in PEI started last fall with an above average amount of snow cover arriving early and continuing well into the spring. This resulted in very little winter kill and a delayed start to the growing season. The spring was cool and wet with several infection periods for *Monilinia* blight taking place. Most growers required two applications of fungicides for *Monilinia* protection. Pollination was delayed but weather was good overall with the exception of a cool, wet period during bloom. A couple frost events had minimal effect on the blossom, although a few early clones were affected. PEI beekeepers had approximately 18% winter kill and were able to provide 6,225 colonies to blueberry pollination in addition to 1,500 colonies imported from Ontario. Approximately 1,700 colonies were also imported from Nova Scotia. Fields expressed a large volume of bloom in 2014. *Botrytis* blight was a problem in some areas, but not wide spread. Small pockets of spanworm were reported but did not cause significant damage. Spotted Wing *Drosophila* will be the focus from now until harvest and a cooperative effort is in place to monitor for SWD between the Department of Agriculture & Forestry and processors. SWD findings will be published through an SWD Alert system (email / text messages). PEI is projecting a harvest in excess of 17 million pounds in 2014.

NABC 2014 CROP ESTIMATE

as of July 2014

Millions of Pounds

REGION	2011 FINAL CROP			2012 FINAL CROP			2013 FINAL CROP REPORT 02/26/14			2014 PRELIMINARY CROP REPORT		
	Fresh	Process	Total	Fresh	Process	Total	Fresh	Process	Total	Fresh	Process	Total
Highbush												
Western Region												
British Columbia	40.0	55.0	95.0	50.0	65.0	115.0	55.0	65.0	120.0	60.0	90.0	150.0
California	31.1	11.0	42.1	36.0	6.9	42.9	44.0	9.9	53.9	48.0	11.0	59.0
Oregon	36.4	28.6	65.0	40.7	34.5	75.2	41.6	47.5	89.1	45.0	50.0	95.0
Washington	30.5	30.5	61.0	18.0	52.0	70.0	22.0	58.0	80.0	25.0	65.0	90.0
Sub-Total	138.0	125.1	263.1	144.7	158.4	303.1	162.6	180.4	343.0	178.0	216.0	394.0
Midwest Region												
Illinois	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.2	0.0	1.2	1.2	0.0	1.2	1.0	0.0	1.0
Indiana	1.4	0.2	1.6	1.0	0.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.5	0.7	2.2
Michigan	33.1	38.2	71.3	33.0	54.0	87.0	47.0	67.0	114.0	44.0	38.0	82.0
Others 1/	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3
Sub-Total	36.4	38.4	74.8	35.5	54.5	90.0	50.5	68.0	118.5	46.8	38.7	85.5
Northeast Region												
New Jersey	46.0	15.0	61.0	46.0	5.0	51.0	53.0	12.0	65.0	50.0	5.0	55.0
New York	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.5	0.0	1.5
Ontario	1.9	0.0	1.9	1.9	0.0	1.9	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	2.0
Others 2/	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4
Sub-Total	50.1	15.0	65.1	50.1	5.0	55.1	57.2	12.0	69.2	53.9	5.0	58.9
Southern Region												
Alabama	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.5
Arkansas	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5
Florida	21.5	0.5	22.0	16.0	2.5	18.5	20.0	1.5	21.5	17.0	0.0	17.0
Georgia	36.0	23.0	59.0	36.0	35.0	71.0	32.0	36.0	68.0	50.5	35.0	85.5
Louisiana	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Mississippi	2.5	6.0	8.5	2.3	5.0	7.3	2.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	6.0	10.0
North Carolina	29.0	7.7	36.7	30.0	10.0	40.0	28.0	11.0	39.0	30.0	10.0	40.0
Texas	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	1.5
Others 3/	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.5
Sub-Total	92.7	37.2	129.9	88.4	52.5	140.9	86.3	49.5	135.8	105.5	51.0	156.5
HIGHBUSH TOTAL:	317.2	215.7	532.9	318.7	270.4	589.1	356.6	309.9	666.5	384.2	310.7	694.9

2014 Wild Blueberry Commission Members

Roy Allen, Chair

Allen's Blueberry Freezer
PO Box 536
Ellsworth, ME 04605
Tel: (207) 667-5561
Fax: (207) 667-8315
Email: allensblueberries@gmail.com

Ragnar Kamp, Vice Chair

Cherryfield Foods, Inc.
PO Box 128
Cherryfield, ME 04622
Tel: 546-7573
Fax: 546-2713
Email: rkamp@cherryfieldfoods.com

Annie Allen

G.M. Allen & Son, Inc.
PO Box 454
Blue Hill, ME 04614
Tel: (207) 469-7060
Fax: (207) 469-2308
Email: allengmblue@gmail.com

Richard Gardner

PO Box 127
East Machias, ME 04630
Tel: (207) 255-6039
Email: dmgard@maineline.net

Darin Hammond

Jasper Wyman & Son
PO Box 100
Millbridge, ME 04658
Tel: (207) 638-2201 or 546-2311
Fax: (207) 638-2145
Email: dhammond@wymans.com

Ed Hennessey

Machias Savings Bank
PO Box 318
Machias, ME 04654
Tel: (207) 255-9280
Email: EHennessey@machiassavings.com

Todd Merrill

Merrill Blueberry Farms
PO Box 149
Ellsworth, ME 04605
Tel: (207) 667-2541
Fax: (207) 667-4052
Email: tmerrill@merrillwildblueberries.com

Larry Scott

Scott's Blueberry Farm
391 Goshen Road
Waldoboro, ME 04572
Tel: (207) 832-4160

Wild Blueberry Commission (position currently open)

5784 York Complex, Suite 52
Orono, ME 04469-5784
Tel: (207) 581-1475
Fax: (207) 581-3499

2014 Wild Blueberry Advisory Members

Bill Malay, Chair

Cherryfield Foods, Inc.
PO Box 128
Cherryfield, ME 04622
Tel: (207) 546-7576
Email: bmalay@cherryfieldfoods.com

William Mallar, Vice Chair

63 Pumpkin Ridge Road
Marshfield, ME 04654
Tel: (207) 255-4700

Travis Drake

Wyman's C & D Corp.
Rt. 193, Box 601
Deblois, ME 04622
Tel: (207) 638-2201
Fax: (207) 638-2145
Email: travis@wymans.com

Robert Foss

29 East Skunk Ridge Road
Columbia Falls, ME 04623
Cell: 598-6600
Email: foss5@maineline.net

Scott Hennessey

Hennessey Brothers
183 Ridge Road
Marshfield, ME 04654
Tel: (207) 434-5223557-6266
Email: hennesseyscott@gmail.com

Lee Johnston

Merrill Blueberry Farms
PO Box 149
Ellsworth, ME 04605
Tel: (207) 667-9750
Fax: (207) 667-4052
Email: merrblue@merrillwildblueberries.com

Cary Nash

Nash Farms, Inc.
1193 Peabody Road
Appleton, ME 04862
Tel: (207) 785-5270
Fax: (207) 785-6270
Email: lnash@gwi.net

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