

# Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine



Activities, Issues, and News—Spring 2015



## Special points of interest:

- \* Check out the Better Blueberry at [www.wildblueberries.com](http://www.wildblueberries.com) pick taste! pick health! pick Wild!

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## School Nutrition Association Annual Meeting & Trade Show Salt Lake City, July 2015

The School Nutrition Association (SNA) is a nonprofit organization made up of 55,000 school nutrition directors and foodservice workers in the U.S. The SNA annual national meeting takes place in Salt Lake City, Utah from July 12-15 this year and the Wild Blueberry Commission will have a booth in the exhibition hall to showcase Maine Wild Blueberries and their nutritional benefits for school meal programs across the U.S.

The federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 governs over 100,000 school nutrition programs that feed children over 30 million lunches and over 13 million breakfast meals in the U.S. today. The 2010 act established meal program guidelines using federal nutrition standards such as calorie and sodium limits in school meals and mandates to offer greater quantity and variety of fruits and vegetables. Introducing a healthy fruit like Wild Blueberries in school meals goes hand in hand with revised USDA Dietary Guidelines goal

to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. However, school meal programs are continuing to struggle with increased costs, and decreasing numbers of children choosing school lunches. See the School Nutrition Association website for this and more information about school meal programs online at; <https://schoolnutrition.org/about/>.

The state of Maine Department of Education, Child Nutrition Services is the liaison to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service that provides food and cash subsidies for lunch and sometimes breakfast and snacks for pre-school and school age kids in Maine. In addition to cash reimbursements from the USDA, schools are entitled by law to receive USDA foods, called “entitlement” foods, at a value of 23.25 cents for each meal served in Fiscal Year 2012-2013. Schools can also get “bonus” USDA foods as they are available from surplus agricultural stocks (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/rates-reimbursement>). Estimated reimbursement

for “free” school lunches is around \$2.93 per meal if federal requirements for family income eligibility and percentage of meals served by a school nutrition program are met. School lunch costs vary across the U.S. but elementary to high school meals range from \$2.18 to \$2.42 per meal according to SNA data from 2013-14 school year.

The Maine School Nutrition Association (MSNA) is a professional association that is part of SNA. MSNA provides varied services including continuing education, advocacy, and community involvement for school foodservice workers across the state. Increasing wild blueberry growers participation in farm to school opportunities and overcoming barriers to school’s use and purchase of frozen wild blueberries is a key to getting berries into school lunches and breakfasts across Maine and the country. See Farm to School online at; <http://www.farmtoschool.org/our-network/Maine>. 🌱

## Wild Blueberry Commission works with University of Maine to host Trade Show

The UMaine Cooperative Extension Blueberry Hill Farm Field Day on Wednesday, July 15th, 2015 will feature a Wild Blueberry Farm Trade Show for the fourth year. UMaine educational sessions including crop discussions, research talks and in field demonstrations will be on the agenda along with the

trade show. 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.

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### Trade Show Hosts Continued from Page 1

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 15, 2015 at Blueberry Hill Farm in Jonesboro, Maine. This year's Sponsors of the Wild Blueberry Field Day event are Doug Bragg Enterprises, Ltd. and Theriault Equipment. Additional sponsorships are available and exhibitors are

welcome to support the Wild Blueberry Field Day and Farm Trade show.

We expect attendance of over 200 farmers and guests at this annual event and new trade show. There will be a limited number of outdoor spaces available at the show and vendors must pre-register to get a booth

space. Each registration will include a booth space, 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 plan to attend the Field Day and Trade Show or if you would like to register as a vendor. 🍷

## Wild Blueberry Commission at the Eastern States Exposition – Ag Education Volunteers needed for the Big E

Every year at the 17 day Big E Exposition 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



Big E public education booth

blueberry samples to fairgoers. Most volunteers attend the fair for two or three days, working at the information booth for about 6 hours, leaving time

to attend a variety of fair activities. Volunteer expenses at the Big E 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 purchase the wild blueberry plant brought from the University of Maine's Blueberry Hill Farm. The Wild Blueberry public education and foodservice booth showcase a professional design and present a colorful exhibit in the Maine Building. Please join us at the Big E in the Fall of 2015! 🍷

## Wild Blueberry Association of North America – U.S., Agricultural trade association that promotes Wild Blueberries

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America – U.S. (WBANA) is a trade association of growers and processors of Wild Blueberries. Grower and processor members of WBANA serve on the board and committees that approve marketing and promotion programs for Wild Blueberries including the development of promotional materials for trade and consumers, the export program, and the Health Research Summit held in Bar Harbor each summer.

In 2013, the Ethos Marketing agency in Westbrook, Maine began developing the annual Wild Blueberry marketing program with input from the WBANA board. Key messages to consumers and the trade promotes the health benefits and premium advantages of Wild Blueberries in the U.S. and abroad. Over the last 20 years, marketing and educating consumers and the trade about the nutritional benefits and the health story of Wild Blueberries and other premium unique

Wild Blueberry advantages has helped to increase the demand for IQF wild blueberries as an ingredient, in wholesale form for hotels and restaurants, and in retail packages for consumers in supermarkets in North America and around the world. The five year average annual production of Maine wild blueberries is now over 89 million pounds. USDA statistical information indicates that the total U.S. blueberry crop was over 564 million pounds in 2012,

16% in wild blueberries and 84% are cultivated regular blueberries. At the same time, consumption in the U.S. has grown to 1.3 pounds per capita making the U.S. a net importer of blueberries. Though many fresh and frozen blueberries are grown and consumed in the U.S. most of the fresh berries imported come from Chile (50%) during the off season months and Canada (25%) during the summer. Twenty percent of the IQF wild blueberry crop is exported. 🍷