

Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine



Activities, Issues, and News—Winter 2018



Special points of interest:

Check out
www.wildblueberries.com
Wild Blueberries for
All Occasions!

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“By educating these decision-makers on the advantages and versatility of Wild Blueberries, we aim to inspire more schools to make Maine Wild Blueberries a core part of their school menus,” said Nancy McBrady, Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Commission

5784 York Complex, Suite 52
Orono, Maine 04469-5784

Phone: 207-581-1475
Fax: 207-581-3499

Innovating Wild Blueberry school recipes on a national stage

The Wild Blueberry Commission (Commission) recently presented a new set of innovative recipes at the School Nutrition Industry Conference (SNIC) in New Orleans. These “base” sauces — sweet and savory — are flexible sauces that are easy ways to incorporate Wild Blueberries into a variety of recipes with minimal prep time that deliver maximum great taste to kids. For example, creating a batch of the base savory sauce allows a school to incorporate Wild Blueberries into four recipes that week: a Wild Blueberry salad dressing, a Wild Blueberry corn salsa, a Wild Blueberry pizza (really!), and a Wild Blueberry dipping sauce for veggies or nuggets. The base sweet sauce can be utilized simply as a sauce for pancakes but also in delicious breakfast bars or a Wild Blueberry Fool (a cross between a smoothie and a dip). Note that all of these recipes not only use the sauces but additional

ARE YOU
sweet



OR ARE YOU
SAVORY?

Wild Blueberries too, so that maximum consumption of Wild Blueberries occurs that week.

These base sauces were developed in concert with Cheryl Wixon, a chef and food engineer based out of Stonington. She, Ron Adams, and Nancy McBrady presented the base sauce concept, demonstrated recipes, and explained the

unique heritage of Maine Wild Blueberries to over 50 state school leaders and regulators at the SNIC. By educating these decision-makers on the advantages and versatility of Wild Blueberries, we aim to inspire more schools to make Maine Wild Blueberries a core part of their school menus. Find the recipes at <https://www.wildblueberries.com/schoolfoodservice-recipes/>. 🍓

FRUIT AS AN INNOVATION

Savory and Sweet Base Sauce - make the most of your marketing with multiple recipes with your featured ingredient!



School Foodservice Program update — Success is building

According to the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service sales data, the Wild Blueberry Commission's (Commission) national Wild Blueberry School Foodservice Program saw an increase in sales by 57 percent in 2017, expanding from 1.18 million pounds sold in 2016 to 2.78 million pounds sold in 2017. Wild Blueberries are now being carried through the USDA Commodity Food Program

in 22 U.S. states. New states added in 2017 were: Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

The Commission has set a goal of increasing demand and sales of frozen Maine Wild Blueberries to 5 million pounds within the next 2-3 years. In order to do so, the Commission is employing a strategy that

differentiates Maine Wild Blueberries from cultivated blueberries by emphasizing their taste and nutritional advantages. Further, the Commission is enhancing its state and national advertising strategy and targeting core national and key state conferences and tradeshow (including some in traditional cultivated strongholds like New Jersey and California). 🍷



New National Products showcasing Wild Blueberries

Over the past two years, WBANA has conducted research that shows that consumers will be more likely to buy, buy more, and pay more for Wild Blueberry products across a host of diverse categories versus those that simply contain

cultivated blueberries. This powerful consumer preference data has been broadcast to the foodservice and food manufacturing world and the results are starting to bear fruit. Industry leaders like Chobani and Kashi have debuted

products that not only contain Wild Blueberries but state it on their labels.

Differentiating between wild and cultivated blueberries is key to driving demand for our product, and successes like these are instrumental toward making that a reality. 🍷

WBANA promoting Maine Wild Blueberries in South Korea

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America – U.S. (WBANA) 2017 export program promoted Maine Wild Blueberries in South Korea through a focused five month public media and advertising campaign to increase retail sales and consumer education and awareness.

Articles developed for the April to August campaign in Korea include: **US Wild**

Blueberries, the Premium Blueberries Nurtured by Nature; Wild Blueberries, the "Super Fruit" with the Highest Anthocyanin Content; and Cooking and Baking with Wild Blueberries for Richer, Deeper Taste.

In June 2017 alone, the media value of the 98 articles released online and through news websites is estimated at over \$275,000 USD.

Additionally, WBANA conducted a 2017 social media campaign in Korea through Facebook, blogs and Instagram. Social media marketing activities were conducted for U.S. Wild Blueberries during the July to December 2017 season and are ongoing for 2018. The promotion of U.S. Wild Blueberries in the Korean market through social media

Maine Wild Blueberries at the Big E in W. Springfield

The Eastern States Exposition (the Big E) is a New England regional outdoor fair that is among the top five in size and attendees in the United States.

The Avenue of States is a street on the Big E 100-acre property where state building replicas come to life after Labor Day in late summer and early fall. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

manages the Maine building at the Big E, including supervising on-site facilities management and determining which vendors will exhibit each year.

The Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine applied to be a vendor this year and recently received the official invite to exhibit in the Maine Building for the 17-day Expo season, September 14–30, 2018. The Maine Building is open for

12 hours per day during the Expo and provides Wild Blueberry menu items for sale, and recipes and information about our unique Wild Blueberry crop. This year we hope to upgrade our educational display and increase attendee interactivity.

If you are interested in volunteering for Wild Blueberry public education at the Big E, contact our office at 207-581-1475. 🌱

Grants and loans are available for farmers

Although limited, financial support for small farms and farm-related businesses is available from a variety of federal, state and local agencies and from non-governmental organizations. Start your search at the USDA website online at: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/grants-and-loans-farmers>

For a variety of sources, including USDA and others that offer grants in the U.S. for agriculture: <https://agfundernews.com/8-organizations-offering-grants-in-agriculture-research-and-development-in-the-us.html> 🌱



Wild Blueberry Research and Extension grants awarded to UMaine

The Wild Blueberry Advisory Committee collaborated with University of Maine in Orono research faculty to support Wild Blueberry Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and plant physiology research proposals in 2017. Commissioner Walt Whitcomb of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry outlined specific priority area for Maine Specialty Crop Block grants, including “Enhancing integrated pest management research and education for programs for specialty crops.”

University of Maine researchers Drs. David Yarborough and Seanna Annis

from the Wild Blueberry Research and Extension program received a 2018 grant to study Wild Blueberry IPM that builds on previous work for preventing weed and disease control resistance in Maine Wild Blueberry fields while adding an economic evaluation to increase efficiency and increase economic returns.

Over the last few years, industry representation from the Advisory Committee, a Commission committee that recommends research and industry priorities to the university for Wild Blueberry studies, have supported the

University of Maine Wild Blueberry researchers’ pursuit of competitive research and Extension grants. The Commission is also working with the university to identify and select new faculty to replace UMaine Wild Blueberry research and Extension team faculty heading toward retirement. Recently hired faculty members Dr. Jennifer Perry, Food Microbiology, and Dr. Yongjiang (John) Zhang, Plant Physiology, are conducting much-needed research to understand best management practice for growing and processing the Wild Blueberry crop. 🌱

South Korea,
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delivers popular recipes and information on health benefits. Connecting with the U.S. Wild Blueberries Korean version website, the social media activities, including monthly consumer contests to attract additional interest, will be regularly posted with news features, articles and relevant information via online channels.

In 2017, a total of 158 social media and blog postings focused on the premium advantages of U.S. Wild Blueberries were produced from July to December. The social media activity from January to June 2018 will include three posts for each social media channel per week, totaling nine posts a week.

Also in November 2017, WBANA participated in a Food Export Northeast focused trade mission to Seoul that provided an opportunity for participation in one-on-one meetings with Korean businesses, market research presentations from USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) and a Seoul retail tour.

The S. Korea market is the U.S.' 7th largest overall export market and 5th largest export market for U.S. agricultural and food products. With the decline to 0% tariffs due to the U.S. Korea Free Trade Agreement and import restrictions on fresh U.S. cultivated blueberries, IQF



Wild Blueberries exports are trending up. IQF cultivated blueberries from Chile and the U.S. are also available in the Korean retail market. The northwest region of the U.S., including Washington and Oregon, are the primary exporters of IQF berries to Korea. Oregon is also the only state in the

U.S. that has met Korean government certification requirements for imports of fresh cultivated blueberries. With continuing WBANA promotion the objective is to keep U.S. Wild Blueberries in the news and online to increase demand in Korea for 2018 and beyond.