

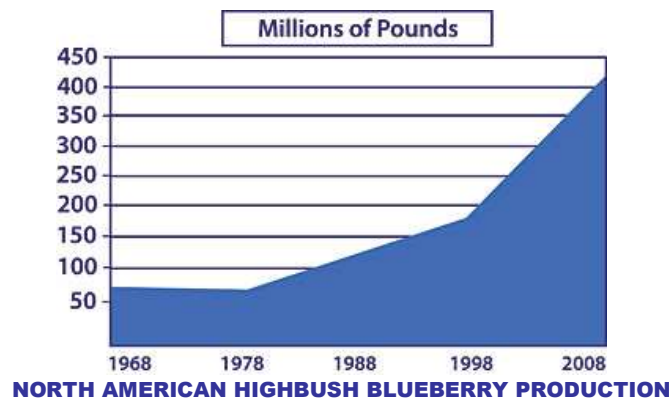
Blueprint 2015 – Building Demand to Meet Future Supply

What is Blueprint2015?

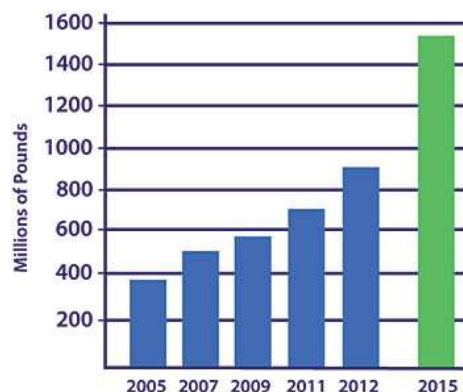
Blueprint2015 is a 5-year plan that the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council has proposed to help keep the blueberry industry as healthy and profitable as it has been during the past 5 years. It involves doubling the growers' assessment rate from 0.6 cents per pound (\$12 per ton) to 1.2 cents per pound (\$24 per ton) to expand promotion and research activities. This is the first assessment rate increase since 2001 when the Council was established.

Why is an increased assessment rate necessary now?

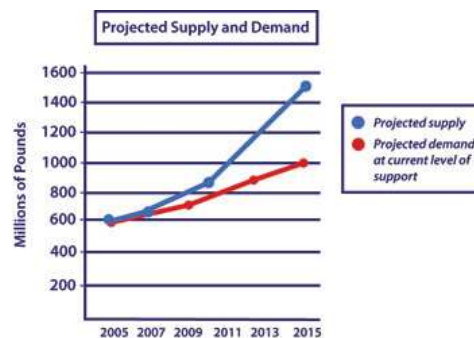
In the past ten years, North American Highbush blueberry production has more than doubled from 185 million pounds in 1998 to 413 million pounds in 2008.



Increases are attributable to more plantings (33% more North American acreage in the past 3 years alone) and better yields. In addition, imports are on the rise as acres planted in South America begin to mature and produce more fruit. By 2015, Highbush blueberry supply is expected to exceed 1.5 billion pounds worldwide.



Demand for blueberries has also been rising, so prices have stayed relatively stable. *But this situation is about to change.* If production increases continue at the projected rates, supply will surpass demand. One projection places future demand at less than 1 billion pounds by the year 2015, assuming that no additional action is taken. *Blueprint 2015* is a plan for the action that must be taken to build demand at a rate that will meet future supply, through enhanced promotion and research programs.



Why won't demand for blueberries continue to grow on its own, as it has done in the past?

The USHBC supports consumer communications programs, reaches out to the foodservice industry and food manufacturers, opens new markets abroad and supports new research initiatives. As a result, blueberries have enjoyed positive press in the past as a food with many potential health benefits--the original "superfood." However, today there are many more competitors claiming superfood status and aggressively competing with blueberries in the marketplace, in the media and online. Other fruit and vegetable groups are investing heavily in promotion (in some cases, significantly more than the blueberry industry) and gaining a greater amount of consumer attention. Consequently more aggressive action must be taken to stay in the spotlight, heighten consumer awareness and keep demand growing.

Meet the Real Superberries
See why you should try acai and goji
By Rachel Meltzer, Rachel Meltzer is a Prevention magazine research editor.
New, exotic-sounding fruits with heavy-duty health claims seem to be everywhere—but the evidence backing these superfoods is often flimsy. Now research finds that acai and goji may live up to the superhero claims.

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Eat Right. Get Healthy.
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Forget Superfruits: Eat a Plum
by Chris Sparling
Plums poised to give blueberries run for the money
By Kathleen Phillips
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

The Cranberry Advantage
The whole fruit trumps juices and canned jellies—with more fiber and antioxidants
The Star: **Cranberries.**
These festive, ruby-hued beauties beat out coffee, blueberries, and even red wine in a recent analysis of antioxidants reported in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

What is the plan for increasing demand for blueberries?

The Council's goal is to double consumption of blueberries in the U.S. by 2015.

To do this, we must:

- Continue to strengthen and expand our promotions and publicity programs
 - Add an advertising component to the marketing mix targeted to key consumer groups
 - Expand Internet presence and Social Media outreach
- Open new markets
- Find new applications and uses
- Expand research and health benefit studies
- Continue to support good management and food safety practices

Programs will target consumers, the foodservice industry, food manufacturers and export markets. These proposed actions will cost more than the current assessment collections can support. That is why the USHBC has voted to increase the assessment rate. With an annual assessment rate of 1.2 cents per pound estimated budget for promotional efforts is \$4 million.

How was the decision made to double the assessment rate? Do growers/packers have any input?

At the Council meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi in February, after considerable study and debate, your area representatives voted overwhelmingly to double the assessment rate. According to the Council's by-laws, a general election is not required to raise the assessment rate. The proposal has been submitted to the AMS-USDA and the next step is to publish it in the Federal register and post it on the government website. The public comment period that follows is an opportunity for blueberry growers and packers to express their opinions. Comments can be made directly on the Federal register website. (Details to follow in June) The USDA will evaluate all posted comments before making the final decision.

What is the timetable for the Plan?

The Blueprint 2015 proposal will be published in the U.S. Federal register in early summer with a sixty-day comment period. If approved by the USDA, the first assessment rate increase will be applied to the 2010 crop. Funds collected in 2010 will support an expanded program in 2011. Of course, promotion and research programs will continue and even expand before that time since the supply that can be assessed—even at the old rate--will be increasing.

Is there someone I can talk to about the assessment rate increase if I have more questions or comments?

Yes. Call Mark Villata, Executive Director of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, at 916-983-0111, or email him at mvillata@ushbc.org.