

# THE USHBC BLUESPAPER

News and Marketing Program Updates from the  
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council  
September 2009

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED ASSESSMENT INCREASE WILL CLOSE ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2009**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will continue to receive comments this month on the proposed rule to increase the USHBC assessment rate from \$12 per ton to \$24 per ton on producers and importers who produce or import more than 2,000 pounds of highbush blueberries. Additional funding generated by this increase will allow the USHBC to expand existing market promotion and publicity efforts, finance expanded health research efforts and more aggressively promote highbush blueberries to keep pace with rapidly increasing production.

The proposal was published in the Federal Register on July 27, 2009 and public comments must be received by the USDA no later than September 25, 2009. Comments may be submitted on the Internet at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov); mailed to the USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Research and Promotion Branch, Stop 0244, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 0632, Washington, DC 20250-0244; or faxed to the USDA at (202) 205-2800.

Copies of the proposed rule may be requested from the same address or by calling (888) 720-9917 during regular business hours. The proposal is also available on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or AMS's website: [www.ams.usda.gov/FVPromotion](http://www.ams.usda.gov/FVPromotion).

## **RECORD FRESH BLUEBERRY MOVEMENT EXPECTED THIS SEASON**

A preliminary "guesstimate" of this year's crop by the North American Blueberry Council (NABC) shows that a record amount of fresh blueberries may be shipped to market this season. As of early August, the NABC forecast a 2009 North American highbush blueberry crop totaling 433 million pounds, a +26 million pound increase over the total of 407 million pounds produced in 2008. A preliminary estimate of the lowbush crop for 2009 is currently at 236 million pounds, down -10 million pounds from the total of 246 million pounds produced in 2008.

As of August it looked like approximately 60% of the 2009 highbush blueberry crop could go to the fresh market (265 million pounds) and the remaining 40% to the process market (168 million pounds). If these figures hold, total fresh blueberry movement in 2009 would be approximately 45 million pounds greater that

the total of 220 million pounds of fresh blueberries shipped in 2008.

NABC domestic per capita consumption statistics show the continued consumer interest in fresh blueberries. Per capita fresh blueberry consumption in the United States totaled an estimated 12.3 ounces per

person in  
2008, a  
+33%  
increase  
over the  
previous  
high of 9.2  
ounces of  
fresh  
blueberries



consumed per person in 2007. Per capita fresh consumption has nearly doubled over the past five years from a total of 6.2 ounces in 2003 to the currently estimated 12.3 ounces in 2008.

Total U.S. per capita consumption of highbush blueberries came in at an estimated 26.6 ounces per person in 2008, nearly 4 ounces more per person than the total of 22.7 ounces per person the previous year.

Process blueberry consumption reached an estimated 14.3 ounces per person in 2008 compared to 13.5 ounces per person in 2007.

### **RESTAURANTS REPORT SUCCESSFUL SUMMERTIME BLUEBERRY PROMOTIONS**

The USHBC has completed a number of successful restaurant promotions this summer with various chains. Highlights from this year's campaigns include a promotion with *Mimi's Café*, a 200 unit chain headquartered in Irvine, California serving an estimated 6.7 million customers each year. *Mimi's* has been running a summertime menu from May 1 to September



30 featuring new blueberry items with the USHBC signature logo used on the menu to draw attention to each dish.

*The Village Inn*, a 343 unit chain with units in 25 states, has

been running a two part promotion starting with a summer menu which also features the USHBC logo to highlight new blueberry menu offerings. A new fall and winter menu is also in the works which will again feature new blueberry offerings in keeping with the season. *McCormick & Schmick's*, with 88 restaurants nationwide, highlighted a blueberry cobbler as their featured dessert this July and *Rock Bottom Brewery*, with 34 units featured a blueberry pound cake this past June and July.

Cafeteria promotions include activities at 50 of *Compass Groups* corporate accounts; cooperative efforts with *Restaurant Associates* in Washington D.C. at the World Bank and the U.S. House of Representatives; and promotions with 150 units nationwide served by *CulinArt*.

Approximately 10,000 customers are served per day at five World Bank buildings. During their promotion

blueberries were featured on all menus along with nutritional information. Blueberries were also promoted in the cafeterias with posters and flyers. *Restaurant Associates* reports that blueberry smoothies, blueberry parfaits and a blueberry-glazed pork tenderloin were among the best sellers during the promotion.

The blueberry promotion by *Restaurant Associates* at the U.S. House of Representatives was featured in eight of their units which serve a total of 13,000 customers per day. Similar to the World Bank promotion, this event also included blueberry items on all menus along with posters and nutritional information.

#### **USHBC MEETING SCHEDULE**

##### **2009 USHBC Fall Meeting- Portland, Oregon**

Thursday, October 15 to Saturday, October 17, 2009

The Benson Hotel- Portland, Oregon

Phone (503) 228-2000

##### **2010 USHBC Spring Meeting- Phoenix, Arizona**

Wednesday, February 24 to Friday, February 26, 2010

Embassy Suites Phoenix Airport- Phoenix, Arizona

Phone (602) 244-8800

##### **2010 USHBC Fall Meeting- Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Thursday, October 14 to Saturday, October 16, 2010

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel- Grand Rapids, Michigan

Phone (616) 774-2000

##### **2011 USHBC Spring Meeting- Dallas, Texas**

Wednesday, March 2 to Friday, March 4, 2011

Hotel- To Be Determined

*Blueberries*

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The USHBC has adopted a diversity outreach plan to attempt to achieve a diverse representation on the Council. USHBC programs and meetings are open to all individuals. The USHBC prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, parental status and marital or family status. The USHBC fully complies with any and all applicable Federal, State, and local equal employment opportunity statutes, ordinances and regulations, including, but not limited to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD).