

THE USHBC BLUESPAPER

News and Marketing Program Updates from the
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council
April 2011

FRESH TRENDS REPORT SHOWS INCREASED BLUEBERRY PURCHASE BASED ON INCOME AND AGE

For the fourth consecutive year the "Fresh Trends Report", published by The Packer, notes that the likelihood of a blueberry purchase increased according to income and age. The 2011 report states that consumers earning more than \$100,000 annually were the most likely group to buy blueberries with the Northeast continuing to be the area with the greatest likelihood of purchase. The report notes that consumers without children at home were more apt to buy blueberries than those with children in 2010. However, it was noted that blueberry purchases did increase according to the number of children in the household.

Married consumers were 28% more likely to buy blueberries than single consumers. Likelihood of purchase based on age shows that 53% of consumers 59 years of age or older were most likely to buy followed by those in the 50 to 58 year old bracket (48%). An average of 38% of consumers in the 23 to 39 and 40 to 49 year age brackets were likely to buy blueberries in 2010.

Overall, 47% of consumers surveyed in 2010 had purchased blueberries within the past twelve months with 75% purchasing conventional blueberries (compared to 84% the previous year), 6% purchasing organic (up from 2% in 2009), 14% purchasing both conventional and organic (up from 13% the prior year) and 5% not sure whether they purchased organic or conventional (compared to 2% the previous year).



USHBC CONTINUATION REFERENDUM SCHEDULED FOR JULY 5 TO JULY 26, 2011

As required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, all research and promotion programs are subject to a continuation referendum every five years. The second continuation referendum for the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council is scheduled for the three week period from July 5 to July 26, 2011.

All eligible blueberry growers and importers will be mailed a referendum ballot directly from the USDA. Those who have not received a ballot in the mail by July 5 are encouraged to contact the USDA or the USHBC office.

Continuance will be based on approval by a majority vote of growers and importers taking part in the mail ballot that also represent the majority of volume of

blueberries produced or imported during the representative period of January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010.

Results from the last referendum in August of 2006 showed that 86.9 percent of those who voted favored continuation of the USHBC and those who voted in favor represented 93.9 percent of the volume of cultivated blueberries represented in the referendum

Reports from the various USHBC committees will be published in this and future issues of the *Bluespaper* to provide readers with an overview of the actions being taken on behalf of the blueberry industry by the Council. Committee reports outline the strategic priorities of the committee and actions taken to date.

In this issue, actions taken by the USHBC Good Management Practices and the USHBC Industry Relations Committees are detailed:

USHBC Good Management Practices Committee

Strategic Priority

Be the industry leader in encouraging good management practices

Recent activities

- Surveyed blueberry industry on food safety and trace ability practices, mailed two food safety booklets to members (2008)
- Distributed memo regarding consumer confusion on Swine Flu and hand harvested blueberries
- Worked with NABC to develop *Good Agricultural and Manufacturing Safety Booklet*
- Supported grant for research initiative on protection of specialty crops against pathogenic/spoilage microorganisms with fruit/vegetable-based treatments
- Working with NABC and media consultant to update issue response plan
- Developed "Rely On Blueberries" crisis alert system
- Ongoing media/issue training

USHBC Industry Relations Committee

Strategic Priorities

Build and utilize knowledge base on supply of blueberries

Engage and encourage active participation of growers

Recent activities

- Funded international blueberry acreage and production reports (2007-2010)
- Worked with the NABC to establish an International Blueberry Organization (IBO), first meeting April 2011
- Added two importers to the Council
- Implemented survey of growers and handlers in 2010 to determine their understanding of the USHBC's role and their satisfaction with the services it provides. The survey also served to gauge which USHBC services are most important to members and solicit suggestions for service improvements.

Survey Results:

- The majority of respondents indicated that they are "very satisfied" with the services provided by the Council and have priorities aligned with those of the Council
- 82 percent characterize overall satisfaction as 8 or higher on a 10-point scale
- Respondents ranked positive media coverage for blueberries and research about their health benefits

as top priorities. Access to market intelligence, industry advocacy and having the opportunity to connect with other members ranked lower in priority

- Respondents indicated they perceive the USHBC successful in addressing its strategic priorities

USHBC Research and Market Promotion Committee reports will appear in the next edition of the *Bluespaper*.

REMINDER-----
SIGN UP FOR USHBC BLUEBERRY ALERT SYSTEM
 To take part in the new blueberry alert system and receive industry updates and notifications, blueberry growers, handlers and marketers need to provide their contact information by either sending their e-mail address to JoDee Gowan at the USHBC office: (jgowan@blueberry.org); or by going directly to the alert system website <http://blueberrycouncil.org/members/amerilert-tools/?type=signup> and following signup instructions.
 Please call the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111 with any questions on the system or signup. .

USHBC MEETING SCHEDULE

2011 USHBC Fall Meeting
Atlantic City, New Jersey
 Wednesday, October 5 to Friday, October 7, 2011
 Caesars - Atlantic City, New Jersey
 Phone (609) 348-4411

2012 USHBC Spring Meeting
San Francisco, California
 Wednesday, February 29 to Friday, March 2, 2012
 Hotel: TBD

2012 USHBC Fall Meeting
St. Louis, Missouri
 Wednesday, October 3 to Friday, October 5, 2012
 Hotel: TBD



The USHBC Bluespaper is published by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council; 80 Iron Point Circle, Suite 114; Folsom, California 95630. Phone (916) 983-0111; Fax (916) 983-9022; Web Site: www.blueberry.org.

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