

# THE BLUESPAPER

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

December 2011

## **HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY PRODUCTION FOR 2011 EXPECTED TO SURPASS PREVIOUS YEAR TOTALS**

An estimate of the 2011 blueberry crop by the North American Blueberry Council (NABC) shows the potential of another record highbush blueberry crop this year. The 2011 domestic highbush crop is currently estimated at 499.9 million pounds, which would be an +11.0 million pound increase over a record total of 488.9 million pounds produced in 2010.

As of the end of October, the NABC estimates a 2011 crop of 236.9 million pounds in the Western Region (up from 211.0 million pounds in 2010) and a crop of 128.8 million pounds out of the Southern Region (up from 120.1 million pounds the previous year). The highbush blueberry crop in the Northeast is currently estimated at 65.7 million pounds, which would be +20.0 million pounds greater than the total of 45.7 million pounds in 2010. The Midwest Region is the only area expected to bring in a smaller crop in 2011 than was harvested in 2010. An estimated total of 68.5 million pounds are expected from the Midwest in 2011 compared to 112.1 million pounds harvested in 2010.



An estimated total of 292.8 million pounds of fresh blueberries are expected to be shipped in 2011 (down slightly from the total of 296.4 million pounds of fresh blueberries in 2010) and 207.1 million pounds are expected to be shipped frozen

(up from 192.5 million pounds the previous year).

Though not official industry statistics, sources currently project a 2011 lowbush blueberry crop of 202.0 million pounds which would be +24.4 million pounds more than the 177.6 million pounds produced in 2010. The combined total of North American blueberries (both highbush and lowbush) comes in at a currently estimated 701.9 million pounds for 2011 which would be +5% greater than the combined total of 666.5 million pounds produced in 2010.

## **PLANS SET FOR 2012 MARKET PROMOTION EFFORTS**

Market promotion proposals were reviewed and approved by the USHBC Promotion Committee at the October 2011 USHBC meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Among the activities for 2012 is the continued Little Blue Dynamos (LBD) campaign designed to provide a means for highbush blueberries to stand out from the crowd of fresh foods also claiming health benefits. LBD branding sets blueberries apart from other berries in order to gain more consumer attention.

The branding salutes the functional benefits of blueberries while at the same time taps into the unique emotional connection consumers have with blueberries. The branding is primarily designed to encourage a new user group of

mothers between the ages of 25 to 45 to connect Little Blue Dynamos to their lifestyle. The LBD branding creates a "value" for blueberries helping the consumer justify the purchase of blueberries while they may be at a slight premium compared to other berries or food choices.

Actions for 2012 include the further development of an integrated advertising campaign through web and print media targeted to women in the 30 to 45 year age range. Print ads will be placed in Food Network Magazine and Cooking Light this June and July. On-line ads will be placed from May to August 2012 on FoodNetwork.com and RachelRay.com along with search ads on Google to encourage more traffic to the Little Blue Dynamos website.



A cooperative promotional effort with *DailyCandy*, a popular on-line resource that delivers shopping, food and lifestyle tips to women readers through email, video and the web, is planned as well as retail trade advertising to increase LBD awareness among retailers, shippers, wholesalers, brokers and distributors, and efforts to encourage the use of the LBD theme by blueberry industry members.

The 2012 consumer and foodservice publicity program includes continued consumer print and on-line media efforts; television placements; expansion and updating of the consumer and foodservice sections of the USHBC website; a social media program; participation in a supermarket dietitian symposium; and continued foodservice activities in the U.S. and Mexico.

The 2012 food manufacturer publicity campaign includes continued technical assistance; collection of market information on new product development with blueberries; technical assistance in developing protocols to allow fresh blueberry shipments to currently restricted markets; trade publicity and advertising; participation in trade shows; and continued school commodity processor interface.

The export market promotion plan for 2012 includes continued collection of market shipment data to identify areas of opportunity; participation in trade shows in Japan, Korea, China, France, Dubai, and Brazil; updates of current USHBC international websites; the continued support of an in-country representative in Taiwan to work with the USDA Agricultural Trade Office in Taipei in participating in retail and foodservice U.S. food promotions and to generate media exposure for blueberries. In-country representatives in Korea, China and Japan are also planned for 2012.

The committee also allocated funds from 2011 reserve for expanded activities in the Asian market which include a public relations campaign in Korea and Japan this Fall and Winter and in the Spring of 2012. The plan includes a trade meeting with blueberry experts providing a briefing on blueberries and health; consumer and trade media briefings; a "Little Blue Dynamos" trade award contest recognizing innovative blueberry products; and the development of micro sites on *Facebook* for consumers and *Linked In* for the trade providing blueberry information, new product information and health messages.

**ATTENTION BLUEBERRY INDUSTRY MEMBERS-  
SIGN UP NOW FOR THE BLUEBERRY ALERT SYSTEM**

To take part in the blueberry alert system send your e-mail address to JoDee Gowan at the USHBC office: ([jgowan@blueberry.org](mailto:jgowan@blueberry.org)); or sign up directly on the alert system website at the following address: <http://blueberrycouncil.org/members/amerilert-tools/?type=signup>.

Please call the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111 with any questions on the blueberry alert system or signup steps.

**USHBC MEETING SCHEDULE AND INVITATION**

USHBC meetings are open to all members of the industry and offer an excellent opportunity to learn more about the Council and the various market promotion and health research activities being conducted by the USHBC. These open meetings also offer the opportunity to contribute by sharing your thoughts with the USHBC.

All members of the blueberry industry are encouraged to attend and participate in USHBC meetings and are asked to also consider future service with the USHBC as an elected member or alternate.

Please contact the USHBC office at (916) 983-0111 if you have any questions concerning the USHBC or future meetings, or for more information about USHBC member or alternate positions.

**2012 USHBC Spring Meeting  
San Francisco, California**

Wednesday, February 29 to Friday, March 2, 2012  
Sheraton Fisherman's Wharf  
Phone (888) 627-7024

**2012 USHBC Fall Meeting  
St. Louis, Missouri**

Wednesday, October 3 to Friday, October 5, 2012  
Hotel: TBD

**2013 USHBC Spring Meeting  
Savannah, Georgia**

Wednesday, February 27 to Friday, March 1, 2013  
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](http://www.blueberry.org) or [www.littlebluedynamos.com](http://www.littlebluedynamos.com).

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