

# Information Sessions Keeping WBPANS Updated



The 2016 WBPANS Executive. Front (left to right)- Art Sargent- Director, Jeff Orr- Past President, Joe Slack- Finance Committee Chair, Barron Blois- President, Dave Atkinson- Vice President, Janet Geldart- Administrative Assistant; Back (left to right)- Stephen Parks-Director, Jim Baillie- Director, Jonathan Millen- Director, Alice Pugsley- Promotion Committee Chair, Jeff Perrin- Director, Peter Rideout- Executive Director. Missing from photo is Jim Wood- Director.

**By Linda Harrington**

Over 300 people attended the Wild Blueberry Producers of Nova Scotia AGM in Truro on Nov. 20th and 21st. The two day meeting started with several back to back information sessions.

Peter Burgess of Perennia gave an update on the Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry. He said the 2015 crop is estimated to be 65 million pounds, grown on 22,000 acres for an estimated 2900 lbs/acre.

There were very good

crops across the Province, with low pressure from disease and good pollination.

In 2015, there were just under 5000 permits issued to import honey bee hives, with 18-20,000 domestic hives, and an increased use of bumble bee quads.

Burgess reported the late spring pushed back the harvest season, resulting in some producers having to pick their fields too early. The harvest season extended into mid-September this year.

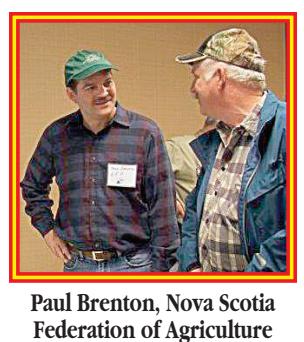
Dr. Debra Moreau suggested cautious optimism on the

spotted wing drosophila, a soft fruit fly that has presented great concern for producers. Research studies in wild blueberries show counts were not as high as expected and it appears there were no significant infestations until after harvest. She still recommends producers continue close monitoring in their fields.

Carolyn Van Den Heuvel, of Farm Safety Nova Scotia reported the Harvester Operator Course was a great success with 16 participants and lots of industry support.



Tasha Fleck, Cavendish Farms



Paul Brenton, Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture



Tony MacDonald, TG Mac Sales

- Massey Ferguson-Kubota Equipment
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# Record Crop of Wild Blueberries for Second Year in a Row

**By Linda Harrington**

The Maritime Provinces have exceeded the five year wild blueberry production volume for the second year in a row, leaving many to ask, "Is this the new normal?"

Newly elected Liberal MP, Bill Casey stopped by the meeting to offer his support and say he is looking forward to working with Federal Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, a farmer from PEI. He suggested the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will be a good thing for wild blueberries, opening up new markets, especially in China.

Two afternoon sessions were split into simultaneous presentations. Pollination Effectiveness was discussed by presenters Dr. Chris Cutler, Dalhousie Fac. of Ag, Robyn McCallum, Syngenta, Tom Cosman, Cosman & Whidden, Bernie Watts, and Koppert Canada.

Dr. David Percival, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture presented Innovations in Double Cropping. The costs of production were explored based on the traditional two year harvest and a three year (double cropping) harvest. The data showed a reduction in cost of production from 46 cents/lb for the two year harvest to 40 cents/lb for the double crop harvest. The double cropping also reduced the carbon footprint. More research is being carried out on optimizing plant growth and development, harvest efficiency, berry quality and reducing energy consumption.

Peter Swinkels, Doug Bragg Enterprises, Dr. Qamar Zaman, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture and Travis Esau, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture presented infor-

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Nova Scotia's producers harvested 65 million pounds this year, slightly up from 62 million in 2014. New Brunswick was significantly up at 77 million pounds; over 60 million last year. PEI produced 25 million.

Maine and Quebec, the other significant wild blueberry producers on the East coast saw their yields decrease in 2015.

The total production for



Mike Burry and Gloria Thyssen of Nova Scotia Crop & Livestock Insurance Commission.



Doug Bragg Enterprises



The Pollination Panel of experts Dr. Chris Cutler- Dalhousie Fac. Of Ag., Bernie Watts, Robyn McCallum- Syngenta, Tom Cosman- Cosman & Whidden Honey.

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