

Wild Blueberry Producers Discuss Market Outlook



The Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia held their Spring Meeting recently. Some of the guest speakers included (left to right) John Quin, Peter Burgess, Peter Swinkles, Dave Sangster and Dale McIsaac. (Harrington Photo)

By Linda Harrington

The Wild Blueberry Association of Nova Scotia (WBPANS) held their annual Spring Meeting in Truro on March 27th, with over 200 people in attendance. Several speakers covered a range of topics from market outlook to improved means of controlling insects and diseases.

Producers were obviously concerned about low crop

prices. Peter Rideout, marketing specialist with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, spoke on marketing and movement of wild blueberries throughout world markets. He discussed the effects of increasing supplies of High Bush Blueberries from the US and South America as well as the Bilberry crop in Europe. World economic conditions

have reduced the demand for wild blueberries as manufacturers look for more economical ingredients. "There doesn't appear to be any sudden return to higher prices," says Mr. Rideout, "The markets will be price driven, with more price driven competition from other ingredients."

Mr. Rideout was optimistic about the potential for new markets in China and South East Asia and he also said continuing research and evidence of health benefits of wild blueberries is helping increase demand.

Field prices have been on a steady decline from \$1.05 a pound in 2007, to 60 cents a pound in 2008 and just 35 cents a pound in 2009. Producers are hearing rumors of prices as low as 25 cents a pound for the coming crop year and some wonder if they can afford to even harvest their crop, with expenses expected to exceed income.

"Producers are being realistic in recognition of market potential and they are looking for ways to optimize the prof-

itability of their crop. They are very conscious of managing input costs more than ever before," says Dave Sangster, WBPANS executive director.

Dr. Qamar Zaman, a researcher at the NSAC, has been working on a potential method to cut costs involved with weed control in the blueberry field. A 20 ft boom, mounted on a farm motorized vehicle, will use image detection sensors and adjustable nozzles to selectively spray only weeds in a field. Initial research has projected savings as high as 80%, which would result in an estimated saving of \$43,000 in a 300 acre field. The spot specific spraying would mean fewer trips, less labor, less fuel and less impact on the field.

Nova Scotia Beekeepers are expecting to feel the sting of lower berry prices, as well. "We have had some long standing rental agreements for hives cancelled," says Roger Morash, NS Beekeepers Association President. "It takes a year to get a hive ready, so we have constant input costs. If there is less demand in the spring, we will already have incurred these costs."

Peter Burgess, a Horticulture Specialist with Agrapoint, says there is now a Beekeeper Hotline for blueberry producers to call for a list of available bee hives. Phone 1-800-406-4636 or go to the website www.extensioncentral.com.

Dr. Chris Cutler, Assist Prof at NSAC discussed ways to promote beneficial pollinators and natural pest enemies in the fields. He recommended using selective insecticide applications where possible and to provide a habitat that will encourage helpful insects like the carabid beetle and wild bees. Habitat can be as simple as leaving hedgerows and strip mowing to building bee nesting blocks in the fields. A way to use mother nature to help cut production costs.

The daylong event was an excellent opportunity for producers to gain helpful information from the guest speakers, and a chance to share information among themselves.

The WBPANS Field Day will be held on Saturday, July 24, 2010 in Debert.

Growing High-Value Trees Seminar - June 12

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culture contractors when offered in 2007-2008.

The Uneven-Aged Management Project is designed to educate woodland owners and silviculture contractors interested in growing long-lived, shade-tolerant tree species and quality forest products. It focuses on silviculture practices associated with uneven-aged management—selection management, crop tree release, and crop tree pruning—and on funding available for these treatments through the ASF's Category 7 Quality Improvement Silviculture Program. The project will also provide woodland owners and contractors with information on forest ecosystem classification and selection of trees that have the potential to grow into high-value products.

The Outreach Project will offer more than a dozen free workshops throughout the province. Workshops will include a visit to a woodlot where quality-improvement silviculture treatments have been or could be conducted. They will emphasize "how to's" of uneven-aged management, with opportunities to learn through hands-on exercises conducted in the field. Woodland owners and contractors will learn how to ensure that quality-improvement silviculture treatments are successful and cost effective, including tree marking and crop tree selection. Registration for each workshop will be capped at 25 people, so pre-registration will be required. A schedule of spring workshops follows this press release.

The project also will offer

educational materials at meetings and conferences and via the Internet. In addition, forestry professionals with expertise in uneven-aged management will be visiting woodlot owners and contractors in the field.

This project is being funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR) as part of program to increase the number of small, private woodlot owners who use uneven-aged forest management methods on appropriate sites.

The Association for Sustainable Forestry is an organization of forest industry representatives, woodlot owner organizations, and representatives of other organizations that provides small private woodland owners with the financial means to implement forest improvement work on their properties. The current outreach effort will be conducted on behalf of the ASF by the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association in collaboration with Picea Forestry Services and Woodlot Management of Bridgewater, NS.

Interested woodlot owners and contractors are encouraged to contact the Category 7 Outreach Project at 902-673-2278 or outreach@asforestry.com.

Spring woodlot owner workshops being offered by the Uneven-Aged Management Outreach Project require Pre-registration for all workshops. Woodland owners and silviculture contractors are encouraged to contact the Outreach Project at outreach@asforestry.com or by calling 902-673-2278.

CMHW Schedule of Events (May 3-May 9)

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Colchester-East Hants Branch schedule of events:

Lapel Flowers: Buy a social network flower, reminding yourself to nurture your social supports. **Tickets available:** Sunday May 2nd, Masstown Market; Monday May 3rd, Truro Mall; Wednesday May 5th, Lawtons; Thursday May 6th, Atlantic Superstore; All week— 25 Revere St., Truro, NS. **Cost: \$2.00**

Stress-less Basket tickets: A luxurious basket of stress relieving prizes, the ultimate pampering kit! **Tickets on Sale:** Sunday May 2nd, Masstown Market; Monday May 3rd, Truro Mall; Wednesday May 5th, Lawtons; Thursday May 6th, Atlantic Superstore All Week—25 Revere St., Truro, NS. **Cost: \$1.00**
Draw Date: Friday May 7th, 25 Revere Street, Truro, NS

Brown Bag Lunch: Nourish your social networks while nourishing you body. Make plans to get together with friends, co-workers, family and enjoy a scrumptious "Brown Bag" lunch. **Date:** Tuesday May 4th. Pre-ordered by—Wednesday April 28th. Call 895-4211 for ordering information. **Cost: \$7.00**

Kitchen Party: A BBQ fundraiser with live music, food and good cheer, Friday May 7th from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the TAAC Grounds in Truro
Menu: Chicken burgers, Oktoberfest sausage, seasoned potatoes, coleslaw, carrot cake and a beverage. On site or advance tickets available. **Cost: \$10.00**, eat in or take out.

Changing Minds Workshop: A community education, two day workshop about the experience of mental illness, 8:30am-4:30pm on Wednesday May 5th—Thursday May 6th at 25 Revere Street. Pre-registration required.

For additional information on the above events please contact Catherine MacRae at (902) 895-4211.

National Mental Health Week - May 3rd-May 9th

"Building your mental health...One support at a time."

Canadian Mental Health Association, Colheser East Hants Branch
25 Revere Street, P.O. Box 1413, Truro, NS B2N 5V2
Phone (902) 895-4211 Fax (902) 895-4027

Glooscap 4-H News

By Ian MacFarlane

This month our 4-H club has been very busy volunteering. It was very exciting with John Deere Days and the Truro Horse Fair both being held on the same weekend of April 17 & 18. I hope everyone who attended enjoyed themselves.

The Colchester County Rally was held at North River Elementary School on April 10. Our club was well represented in the Jr. Speech competition with Anna MacFarlane intro-

ducing, Brad MacLaughlin giving his speech Percy Jackson and the Olympians, book vs. movie and Shelby Rushton thanking him.

Ian MacFarlane also competed in the Jr. Singles Demonstration. Everybody did really well.

Our monthly meeting was held on Tuesday, April 6, 2010 at the Bass River Community Hall. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be May 4, 2010 at 7 o'clock.



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Bass River United Baptist Church
5692, Hwy 2 - Bass River NS - BOM 1B0

Sunday Worship Service 11 a.m.
Bible Study - Mondays 10 a.m.



Gospel Coffee House

4th Saturday every month ... 7 p.m.

Lic. Larry Tirrell - Pastor

Church: 902-647-2567 Home: 902-843-5941

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ECHO Spring Savings



ECHO was the first manufacturer to offer a five year consumer warranty on all of their products including lifetime ignition. Plus, the new Power Boost Vortex™ engine is more powerful, fuel efficient and environmentally clean. *Special prices in effect until May 31, 2010. Prices do not include applicable taxes.



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