

Wild Blueberry Yields Unpredictable



A delegation from the United Kingdom stopped by the Wild Blueberry Institute in Debert for a tour and information session on August 26th. (Left to right) Dave Sangster- Exec Director of the Wild Blueberries Association of Nova Scotia, Emma Slawinski- Specialist Reporter with Food News, Peter Rideout- Dept. Agriculture Marketing Specialist, Dr. Wilhelmina Kalt- Research Scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Amy Hollamby- Editor Confectionery Production, Mike Nicholas- WBANA's United Kingdom promotional agency, Neri Vautour- Exec. Dir WBANA, Ian Healey- Editor-in-Chief Food Marketing and Technology and Dr. Dave Percival- NSAC Wild Blueberry Research Chair.

The total provincial wild blueberry harvest is estimated to be in the 25-30 million pound range, down from 33 million pounds produced last year.

By Linda Harrington
It seemed like a case of "feast or famine" for local wild blueberry producers. "There were some very strong fields this year and some were very weak," says Dave Sangster, Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia. "There seemed to be a pattern of low crop yields in

areas east of Truro with some larger yields reported from fields in the Debert area and West Brooke area (outside Parrsboro)." The total provincial wild blueberry harvest is estimated to be in the 25-30 million pound range, down from 33 million pounds produced last year. Sangster expects the lower

crop yields in some fields were the result of adverse weather conditions which resulted in "poor pollination, disease, frost damage and in some cases berries that were slow to ripen."

Producers are receiving an initial price of 70 cents/lb this year; up slightly from last year's final price of 65 cents (growers were paid 60 cents initially last fall with an additional 5 cents/lb paid this spring).

The demand for wild blueberries has been strong. "There is a great deal of interest internationally," says Dave Sangster, "We had groups visiting this summer from Japan, United Kingdom and South Korea." He says the South Korean's appear to be very aggressive in their pursuit of purchasing wild blueberries and there have been inquiries from other countries, including China.



Research into the health benefits of wild blueberries continues to show positive findings. Dr. Wilhelmina Kalt, Research Scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, gave an update on Wild Blueberry Health Research to UK food marketing representatives at the Wild Blueberry Institute in mid-August. She presented an extensive list of research studies currently underway, covering significant effects on human health from vision to cardio protection.

Wild blueberry harvest wrapped up the first week of September.

The Wild Blueberry Association's Annual Meeting will be held on Nov. 18th and 19th in Truro.



Joe Slack, of Slack Farms, poses for a South Korean film maker in his wild blueberry field on Middle Road, Debert. The South Korean delegation from New Dream Star Group Inc. were interested in learning all about the productions of wild blueberries to pass along information to their international trading partners.

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Deadline for the November issue of **The Shoreline Journal** is October 18

REMINDER

Don't miss our annual Auction at the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade Highway #2, west of Truro

Harvest Sale & Auction

Starts Friday, Sept 30 at 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm
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NOTE: If you have items to drop off members are on duty Thursday evening or call 897-5951 or check our website for updates <http://www.onslowbelmontfb.ca/>

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Mike Nicholas, with WBANA's United Kingdom promotional agency, enjoys a taste of wild blueberry juice as Dave Sangster, Exec Director of the Wild Blueberries Association of Nova Scotia looks on. Emma Slawinski (centre) and Amy Hollamby (right) were two other members of the UK delegation visiting the Debert Wild Blueberry Institute on August 26th.

My Favourite Pet

Emily Prescott, a member of the Glooscap Trail 4-H Club, is shown with her pet rabbit, a 2 year old Holland Lop named Sodo.

Emily and Sodo will receive a \$20.00 Gift Certificate from Clarence Farm Services Ltd. and the Shoreline Journal.

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