

North Carolina Blueberry News



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**North Carolina
Cooperative Extension Service**
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

A newsletter for commercial blueberry producers, edited by specialists and agents of the NC Cooperative Extension Service and supported by the NC Blueberry Council, Inc.

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BLUEBERRY OPEN HOUSE AND EXPO -- JANUARY 10-11



This Year:

- Organic production
- Drip irrigation
- Freeze protection
- "V" Safety credits
- Health research
- New equipment

Please mark your calendar! The 40th Annual Open House of the North Carolina Blueberry Council, Inc. will be held January 10-11, 2006 at the Sampson Agri-Exposition Center in Clinton, NC. For information about the site and how to get there go to: www.sampsonexpo.com.

Last year we had a tremendous response from equipment, service and supply vendors, and filled the building with booths and displays! This meeting is an excellent opportunity for growers to interact with manufacturers and to "look before you buy".

Enclosed is a copy of the registration form for the meeting. Pre-registration is encouraged for all

attendees. The form also allows those who cannot attend to maintain their membership in the North Carolina Blueberry Council. **Those who pre-register by Dec 23 receive a \$5.00 discount.** Membership includes a copy of the proceedings, a year's subscription to this newsletter, and mailings from the NCBC board of directors on issues of interest to all blueberry growers in the state.

2006 NC Blueberry Open House & Trade Show

Sampson Agri-Expo Center, Clinton, NC

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

8:30 - 9:00 am Grower registration

9:00 - 11:55 am Research reports & invited talks, new equipment

12:15 - 1:30 pm Catered lunch

1:30 - 4:30 pm Trade show

3:00 - 5:00 pm 2-hour training session for growers needing "V" safety certification

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

8:30 - 9:30 am Coffee & donuts, trade show continues

9:30 - 11:30 am Research reports, invited talks, business meeting, drawing for door prizes

11:30 am Adjourn

NATIONAL BERRY CROPS INITIATIVE – STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP HELD IN GENEVA, NY.

Courtney Weber, Horticultural Sciences, Cornell University, Geneva, NY

Leading academic, government and industry experts in berry production, breeding, pest control and marketing met in Geneva on October 24-26, 2005 to begin the process of developing a **National Strategic Plan for Berry Crops**, which includes but is not limited to strawberries, brambles (raspberry, blackberry and others), blueberries, cranberries (including lingonberry), and Ribes (gooseberry and currant). The USDA and other federal agencies have taken notice as specialty crops (fruits, vegetables, nuts, ornamentals etc.) have exceeded program crops (corn, soybeans, cotton, etc.) in value in the U.S. in recent years. In order to take advantage of this attention, specialty crop industries must have a clear and concise message that can be communicated to policy makers.

Dr. Tom Bewick, National Program Leader for Horticulture, USDA-CSREES, organized the meeting in collaboration with Dr. Courtney Weber and Dr. Marvin Pritts of Cornell University as part of an ongoing effort to organize specialty crop industries. University and USDA researchers from 23 states, industry representatives from Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Ocean Spray Cranberries, the Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission, the Washington Red Raspberry Commission, the California Strawberry Commission, the North American Strawberry Growers Association, the North American Bramble Growers Association, the North American Blueberry Council, the Wild Blueberry Council and the New York State Berry Growers Association, along with individual growers, met to begin the process of developing a common message from these diverse industries.

The overall goal of this workshop and other initiatives is to have a unified voice across the wide range of crops grown by horticulture producers.

Efforts in the tree fruit and grape industries have

yielded promising results. Jim McFerson of the Northwest Tree Fruit Technology Group, Jerry Lohr of J. Lohr Winery, and Bill Nelson of Wine America provided insights into the efforts in their industries to work together and highlighted their success with recent funding initiatives in the USDA National Research Initiative (NRI) and the Viticulture Consortium. In these cases, a unified message from the tree fruit industry resulted in a concentrated effort for the family Rosaceae (apples, stonefruits, strawberries, brambles etc.) in the Plant Genome Section of NRI's 2004 grant program. The Viticulture Consortium provides funding for grape research annually to help the grape and wine industries.

Significant progress was made during the event towards common goals for berry crops. Core values pertaining to integrity, cooperation, sustainability, and leadership were outlined along with a vision statement and core purpose. Issues facing the industry were clarified and categorized into social and cultural aspects, political climate, economic factors, technological factors, and production challenges. A series of goals for the overall industry to maintain and strengthen the industry were proposed for discussion in future committee meetings. A governance structure including an executive committee with an executive director was developed that includes regional representation through commodity committees and liaisons with academic and USDA personnel. Overall, it was an excellent and large first step in developing a plan for the future of the industry.

Additional workshops will be held at future commodity conferences starting with the Southeast Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Savannah, GA on January 6-8, 2006. For more information about the initiative and future meetings, contact Dr. Tom Bewick at: tbewick@csrees.usda.gov

(Reprinted from the NY Berry News)

2005 CROP REVIEW

Winter chilling was adequate but below average for the 2004-2005 winter. Blueberries in the commercial growing areas of southeastern North Carolina were observed to leaf and flower normally this spring. However, the 2005 NC blueberry harvest was delayed 10-14 days by unusually cool temperatures that affected bloom date and ripening. Cool, wet weather also caused poor pollination in some fields. As a result of the delayed harvest, minimal amounts of fruit were packed in early-season 4.4 oz containers, with most marketers packing their earliest berries in pint containers.

Harvest of early-season cultivars Star and O'Neal began around May 24. Growers did not begin harvesting significant volume of the main-season cultivar Croatan until after Memorial day. Harvest was complicated by intermittent rains. Significant acreage of a new cultivar, Legacy, was harvested this year, beginning around June 12. Later-ripening cultivars (rabbiteye cultivars such as Premier, Tifblue and Powderblue) were also delayed, but strong demand allowed marketers to sell fresh-packed fruit later than usual, into the third week of July. Early estimates for the 2005 NC blueberry crop are 16.5 million lbs fresh and 8 million lbs processed. This total (24.5 million lbs) is approximately 2 million lbs higher than the 2004 crop.

ADVERTISEMENTS

BLUEBERRY PLANTS – FINCH BLUEBERRY NURSERY, P.O. Box 699, Bailey, NC 27807. (252) 235-4664 or: 1-800-245-4662. Free Brochure.

MOORE'S MACHINE SHOP – Machining, welding, burning, fabricating. Contact Kenneth R. Moore, Owner/Operator, Phone/Fax (910) 283-7288.

GEORGIA BLUEBERRY CONFERENCE (2006 Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference) Savannah, GA, January 6-9, 2006. Contact: 1-877-994-3842.

ISLAND GROVE AG PRODUCTS – Don't buy plants until you've talked with us. We have all the southern highbush varieties from the University of Florida. We will grow specifically for your needs. Call Sheri Brothers at (352) 481-5558. Lic. No. 47217870 Hawthorne, FL

BLUEBERRY PLANTS FOR SALE – TINGA NURSERY – We will contract grow for your needs, rooted cuttings (liners) or 1-gal potted plants. (910) 762-1975, FAX (910) 763-4231

CUSTOM PROPAGATION -- BLUEBERRIES & MUSCADINE GRAPES – Taffy Aukamp, (910) 645-6198

WANTED – BLUEBERRY FARM – Buyer seeking to purchase an existing farm in southeastern NC – 910-533-2444

SAMPSON PLANTS – 8,000 field-ready liners, contact Fall Creek Nursery, 1-800-538-3001

USED BLUEBERRY EQUIPMENT FOR SALE -- Contact Ira Cline, (828) 464-5942

1. SMALL FORCED-AIR BERRY COOLER – “Cool and Ship” 34,500 btu/1 hp unit, insulated, portable, will rapidly cool up to 72 flats of blueberries – \$ 1,500

(For information on “cool and ship” units, go to: <http://www.bae.ncsu.edu/programs/extension/publicat/postharv/ag-414-7/index.html>)

2. PACKING LINE EQUIPMENT – Inspection table with cleaner/blower, excellent condition, \$1,200. De-nester, filler, closer and lazy susan, excellent condition, \$5,800.

BLUEBERRY, RASPBERRY AND OTHER SMALL FRUIT PLANTS FOR SALE — Hartmann's Plant Co. P. O. Box 100, Lacota, MI 49063. Ph: (269) 253-4281, Fax (269) 253-4457 info@hartmannsplantcompany.com

BLUEBERRY PROPAGATION SERVICES – Need plants? Let us root them for you! -- Kristen & Lauren Johnson, (910) 669-2120

THE BLUEBERRY NURSERY – Custom orders accepted, contact Paul Peterson, (910) 588-4205, cellular (910) 874-2124

COMMENTS REQUESTED -- If you have questions, corrections or suggestions for improving this newsletter, contact Bill Cline, (910) 675-2314, E-mail: bill_cline@ncsu.edu

North Carolina Blueberry Council, Inc. 40th Annual Open House

in cooperation with
North Carolina State University and the NC Cooperative Extension Service
January 10-11, 2006 at the
Sampson Agri-Expo Center, Clinton, NC

MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Early pre-registration must be postmarked by FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2005

Participant Name(s) _____

Company/Farm _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

NEED TO JOIN THE NC BLUEBERRY COUNCIL BUT CAN'T COME TO THE MEETING? To Join or renew membership, just check here _____ to let us know you will not be attending, fill in this form to verify your address for the newsletter, and send in your registration fee.

REGISTRATION FEE – (Choose one option)
Includes membership in the NC Blueberry Council, one copy of the Proceedings, Newsletter and other mailings

1. Early (before Dec 23) \$30.00
OR
2. Late (Dec 24 - Jan 4) \$35.00 \$ _____
OR
3. At the door (Jan 10) \$35.00

MEALS (not included in registration) \$6.00 x number attending \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please make checks payable to the NORTH CAROLINA BLUEBERRY COUNCIL and mail your completed form with payment to:

NC Blueberry Open House
3800 Castle Hayne Road
Castle Hayne, NC 28429

For more information contact: Bill Cline • NCSU Hort. Crops Research Station • 3800 Castle Hayne Road • Castle Hayne, NC 28429 • (910) 675-2314 • FAX (910) 675-0242 • e-mail: bill_cline@ncsu.edu