



MAY 2016

# dispatch



## Nova Scotia's Provincial Berry

Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia

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## WBPANS TWILIGHT MEETINGS

This year's wild blueberry producer Twilight Meetings will have a particular focus on land development considerations during the 5 pm field walks led by Peter Burgess, as well as looking at insect and weed management issues and other aspects. We will also have the opportunity to introduce the new Atlantic Technology Transfer Team for Apiculture, led by Robyn McCallum who will be on hand to talk about various aspects of pollination. We will also have an opportunity at each of the four twilight meetings to look at field sprayer maintenance, calibration and practical use.

The program will also include the popular updates on important on-going work and new projects from several leading scientists on our research team, including Dr. David Percival, Dr. Chris Cutler, Dr. Qamar Zaman and Dr. Scott White, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture and Dr. Sonia Gaul, and Dr. Debra Moreau from AAFC.

5:00—6:00 pm Field Walks looking at production issues and focusing on land development

6:00 - 8:30 pm Researcher updates and activities:

- **Dr. David Percival**—Disease Management and Fruit Quality
- **Dr. Scott White**—Weed Management
- **Dr. Chris Cutler**—Insects & Pollination
- **Robyn McCallum**—Atlantic Technology Transfer Team for Apiculture
- **Peter Burgess**—Sprayer Maintenance, Calibration & Practical Use
- **Dr. Sonia Gaul**—AAFC Kentville Research Update
- **Dr. Debra Moreau**—Spotted Wing Drosophila Update

These popular meetings are once again being organized by the **Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia Research Committee** and the **WBPANS office**, in partnership with **Perennia, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada** and **Dalhousie University, Faculty of Agriculture**. This provides producers with an excellent opportunity to visit wild blueberry fields, to have insects, diseases and weed pest problems identified, review soil fertility, pollination, as well as discuss nozzle selection and sprayer calibration.

This year, we will again host **FIELD WALKS** with growers, researchers and extension specialists in each of the locations starting at **5:00 pm**, to identify and assess pest pressures in selected commercial wild blueberry fields.

Refreshments provided courtesy of **Green Diamond Equipment Ltd.**

Dates and locations for the TWILIGHT MEETINGS are as follows:

<b>May 26 (Thursday)</b>	<b>5:00 pm—8:30 pm</b>	<b>East Kemptville Fire Hall, East Kemptville, Yarmouth County (Supper included)</b>
<b>May 30 (Monday)</b>	<b>5:00 pm—8:30 pm</b>	<b>WBPANS Office, 168 Dakota Rd. Debert</b>
<b>May 31 (Tuesday)</b>	<b>5:00 pm—8:30 pm</b>	<b>John Cameron's Receiving Shed, 648 Sherbrooke Rd, East River Saint Marys</b>
<b>June 2 (Thursday)</b>	<b>5:00 pm—8:30 pm</b>	<b>Art Sargent's Receiving Shed, 1410 Smith Hollow Rd, Parrsboro</b>

### Reminders:

- ◆ **Producers may bring samples of insects, diseases and weeds to the meetings for identification.**
- ◆ **Phone Peter or Janet for more information at 902-662-3306.**

## WBPANS FIELD DAY

The 2016 WBPANS Field Day, will be held Saturday, July 16, 2016, at Slack Farms, 841 Middle Road, Debert, NS  
Thank you to Slack's for offering their shiny new facility! The Field Day Committee is working on an afternoon tour in the local area with some interesting visits. Exhibitors are lining up with machinery and new technology displays! Stay tuned for more details

## Wild Blueberry Blight Line 902-662-4242

The Wild Blueberry Blight Line is up and running again for 2016. Updates will be made to the phone-line (902-662-4242) late in the afternoon on Tuesday's and Friday's. Information will also be posted on the Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Blog (<http://www.novascotiawildblueberryblog.com/>)

If growers have any questions regarding *Monilinia* infection and control, please contact Peter Burgess at Perennia (902-896-0277)

## Wild Blueberry Market Commentary, May 2016

The wild blueberry industry has seen two very productive growing seasons in 2014 and 2015. Looking back at what was considered an "average" crop in 2013, the 2014 crop was estimated at 53% larger and 2015 was 43% larger than 2013. In other words, we have harvested the equivalent of three 2013 crops in the last two seasons. The general wild blueberry field situation at this very early stage in the 2016 season is of conditions close to what we have seen in the past two springs: light snow cover, but a very mild winter in the southern Maritimes and Maine, abundant snow cover in northern NB and Quebec. There are very few reports of any winter injury and after a month of miserable weather, bud development is more or less at a normal stage for this date. Pollination weather and risk of frost are what we will be watching for over the coming weeks. Early reports this spring from the major highbush blueberry growing area in the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington and BC) indicate they are having an earlier and drier than normal season so far.

Inventories of frozen blueberries (wild & cultivated) also reflect the crop production estimates of the past two growing seasons. According to the USDA, the total volume in storage as of Jan 31, 2016 was 61% higher than a year earlier, mostly due to increased wild blueberries in storage in the Northeast. Overall US storage holdings were 113% of a year earlier, which reflects a strong fresh marketing season (their preferred market) for cultivated blueberries in 2015 and fewer diversions of cultivated blueberries to freezers. It's important to remember when looking at steadily increasing production numbers each year that per capita consumption of all types of blueberries is also increasing, driven by more promotion and consumer awareness of the strong health messages about wild blueberries and other fruit. Blueberries are second only to strawberries in overall berry consumption now in North America. The recently-released March 31 US Cold Storage inventory figures show a good 26% disappearance of frozen blueberries (mostly wild) from cold storages since February in the Northeast. The recently-announced offer to purchase up to 30 million lbs of frozen wild blueberries for the USDA school lunch program is expected to have a positive effect on inventories.

Marketing and sales efforts to move this strong supply of wild blueberries have been aggressive, particularly in the North American and European markets. Marketing budgets have increased for these key markets and sales activities have intensified with existing and new customers. The Canadian dollar, currently trading at .77US and .68 Euro has been a positive factor in both of those markets. Exports of Canadian frozen wild blueberries to the US increased 31% in 2015 over the previous year. The volume of exports to the EU for 2015 was up 27%.

The supply shift in wild blueberries since 2013 has focused the marketing and sales efforts of the industry toward working closely with long-standing overseas and domestic customers, which can build volume quickly, as we've seen in the US and Europe, as well as creating the opportunity with increased volume, to develop new markets and new customers over the long term. More and more industry veterans and our research and extension specialists agree that the way forward for producers and processors alike will be toward producing an ever increasing proportion of top grade fruit for the market and ever sharper management of production costs and efficiencies for farm profitability.

# Introduction to Wild Blueberry Harvester Course

Farm Safety Nova Scotia and the Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia are pleased to be offering the Introduction to Wild Blueberry Harvester Operation Course this year in a **NEW** format!

The objective of the course is to introduce new and to refresh more experienced harvester operators on safe and efficient wild blueberry harvester operation.

**Theory Day – July 11**  
Collingwood Fire Hall

**Practical Days – July 12 & 13**  
Collingwood

## Full course

**Cost \$175/participant**

Available to those wishing to attend the theory and a practical day. This will give the attendees time in the seat with an experienced operator. Attendees will be assigned a time to attend the practical and only be expected to attend one of the two practical days. This is designed for newer operators. Attendees must have tractor operation experience. **Limited enrollment (max. 20)**

## Theory Day Refresher

**Cost \$75/participant**

Available to those wishing to attend only the theory day to gain a refresher on safe operating and best practices for blueberry harvester operation. This is available for more experienced operators.

**Note: Register by June 6<sup>th</sup> to secure a seat. Course registration will be opened to other provinces after this date.**

*The course is supported by Doug Bragg Enterprises and Perennia.*



## 2016 MEETING DATES

- WBPANS Twilight Meetings - May 26—East Kemptville Fire Hall, East Kemptville, Yarmouth Co.
  - May 30— WBPANS Office, 168 Dakota Rd, Debert, NS
  - May 31—Cameron's Receiving Shed, 648 Sherbrooke Road, East River St Marys
  - June 2— Sargent's Receiving Shed, 1410 Smith Hollow Rd, Parrsboro, NS
- WBPANS Field Day—Saturday, July 16, 2016 — Slack Farms, 841 Middle Road, Debert, NS
- WBANA Symposium—October 20 & 21, 2016—Fredericton Convention Centre, Fredericton, NB
- WBPANS Annual Meeting—November 18 & 19, 2016—Best Western Glengarry, Truro

## **WILD BLUEBERRY ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA (WBANA-CANADA) UPDATE**

WBANA Canada attended and participated in all of the regional producer associations' Annual General meetings in March and April 2016. Gilles Déry, President of WBANA Canada, WBANA board member Tom Matheson and Executive Director Neri Vautour reported on the direction of the WBANA-coordinated global marketing program for wild blueberries, its current activities in the major markets and discussed some new approaches to building the industry's existing business as well the development of new market opportunities. In addition to ongoing focus on WBANA's primary role in marketing and promotion and support for health research, the Association is also pushing hard on market access issues, to achieve reduced tariffs and a level playing field in our newly developing markets, in the face of increasing competition from other fruit.

The WBANA Canada Board met recently by conference call and approved the 2016-17 budget. As we indicated during the presentations, we will be taking a sharper and more aggressive approach in our promotions and marketing activities. Recent figures show that Canada has increased exports of frozen wild blueberries to the US market by 37% since 2011. There is still room for considerable growth in this market, in the long-standing customer categories and in new product areas. WBANA is investing more funds in US market development as well as increasing funding for our European and in Asian activities.

WBANA Canada will, of course, participate in all of the upcoming producer field days in July and we look forward to discussing the marketing program in greater detail and hearing any questions or comments producers may have.

Finally, don't forget the **2016 WBANA/ Wild Brew Symposium** will take place at the **Fredericton Convention Centre in Fredericton New Brunswick on Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup> and Friday October 21<sup>st</sup>**. The organising committee is putting together an excellent program. Researchers from around the region will be presenting the latest results on their ongoing wild blueberry field management work. All of WBANA's promotional agencies from our major markets around the world will also be there with presentations on their various activities and available to discuss their unique ideas for promoting Wild Blueberries. Please reserve your rooms today by going to:

### **Wild Blueberry Symposium Booking:**

Crown Plaza Fredericton Lord Beaverbrook Hotel  
659 Queen Street, Fredericton, NB  
Tel: 506-455-3371



## **CROWN LAND PILOT PROJECT**

The Wild Blueberry Producers Association of Nova Scotia (WPANS) has been working closely with the Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture to identify suitable Crown lands in Cumberland County for wild blueberry development. Crown land sites in Chase Lake, Thomson Station, Millvale and Wentworth areas are included in a recently released Request for Proposals (RFP). WPANS and the Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture reviewed the RFP process and have made the following changes to this latest proposal:

The lease rate has been changed to an annual rent of \$12/acre;

A number of smaller 20-30 acre lands have been made available;

A user friendly template RFP response form has been developed to help streamline the proposal preparation process; and

The RFP will be open for a longer period, to provide proponents with more time to prepare a proposal.

Similar to the previous RFP, the initial lease agreement will be for a period of twenty (20) years with an option to be renewed for further twenty (20) years. The RFP is open now and closes August 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 at 2:00pm. The RFP is available here: <http://novascotia.ca/tenders/tenders/tender-details.aspx?id=60149339>

Departmental representatives from both Agriculture and Natural Resources will be available in person to discuss the RFP process at the following WPANS Twilight Meetings:

May 30, 2016. WPANS Office. Debert, NS.

June 2, 2016. Sargent's Receiving Shed. Parrsboro, NS.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark TeKamp at 902-424-3488 or [mark.tekamp@novascotia.ca](mailto:mark.tekamp@novascotia.ca)