



OCTOBER 2019

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Nova Scotia's Provincial Berry

Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Conference & WBPANS Annual General Meeting

Where: **Best Western Glengarry Hotel & Convention Centre,**
150 Willow Street, Truro, NS
Tel: 902-893-4311 (please make your own reservations)

When: **Thursday & Friday, November 14 & 15, 2019**

It has again been a challenging year for wild blueberries in Nova Scotia and throughout the broader industry in eastern Canada and Maine. Our Nova Scotia crop is well below average, due to the effects of last September's heavy frost and our very open winter.

Dealing with these continuing challenges and building a positive way forward for our industry has occupied all of the time, energy and resources of the WBPANS Board, Committees and staff over the past year. It's not a challenge we are dealing with on our own, as we work closely with our industry partners from around the region and beyond, as well as provincial and federal government agencies, agriculture and food industry organizations and other commodity groups with common goals and priorities.

We are continuing to advocate for crop insurance and business risk management programs that will provide a reasonable level of protection for our producers when they face crop losses and financial difficulty. The Association supports an active crop research program aimed at keeping us competitive through lower costs, increased productivity and reduced risks from pests, weeds and disease. We are moving forward with more collaborative research funding on a regional level through CWBIRDI. In the marketplace, we are undertaking new projects to build the sales for wild blueberries in the domestic market, while maintaining the programs to support our global marketing activities in export markets around the world, which are the backbone of our industry.

This year's annual conference, **Thursday and Friday, November 14 & 15 at the Best Western Glengarry in Truro** will expand the reach of the event beyond our own industry. During the Thursday session we are inviting representatives of the wholesale, retail and foodservice trade, distributors, government procurement agencies and the culinary trade to attend, learn about our industry and hear how wild blueberries can be a bigger part of their business. The industry has made good progress developing more value-added consumer food products in recent years and we are inviting those companies to showcase their new products in the trade show. A Banquet featuring a wild blueberry menu will be held Thursday evening. On Friday morning, the business of the Association will be open for a full discussion in the business meeting and you are encouraged to attend to hear the reports and provide direction for the future. A full crop research program is planned for the Friday afternoon, with reports from our dedicated team of scientists on their respective research activities and opportunity for producers to bring up their comments and experiences around the crop research program and to give direction for new needs and priorities.

We look forward to seeing you Nov 14 & 15 in Truro.

WILD BLUEBERRY BANQUET

The WBPANS Board of Directors will be hosting a Wild Blueberry Banquet on the evening of Thursday, November 14th, 2019. The banquet will be held in the MacDonald Rooms at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel & Convention Centre, 150 Willow Street, Truro. The reception will begin at 6:00 pm followed by the Banquet at 7:00 pm (cash bar).

The Banquet will feature live music by Gordie Tucker, keynote speaker Chef Alain Bossé, The Kilted Chef and a delicious three course menu featuring wild blueberries. **A limited quantity of Banquet tickets will be available to purchase for \$20 each and can be reserved by calling the WBPANS office at 902-662-3306 or emailing info@nswildblueberries.com before November 13th. Remaining tickets will be sold at the Registration desk on November 14th until 12:00 noon only. Get your tickets early!**



WBANA CANADA UPDATE OCTOBER 2019

The 2019 crop is estimated to be around 270 million pound mark. While **“official numbers” have not been released**, the estimates point to a 265 to 275 million pound crop. Areas such as Maine had better than anticipated crops (87 million pounds!), while others like Quebec, had less than they expected due to dry weather and frost in September.

The first Health Researcher Summit to be held in Canada was very successful! The 3 day event was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, spawned some new and interesting ideas and working relationships between researchers from North America and Europe. The key to the Wild Blueberry Industry is being able to show that Wild Blueberry consumption leads to good health outcomes and we believe we have the people to be able to do that. Some interesting projects will be getting under way in the coming months due to the collaboration of the researchers that attended this event.

WBANA Canada applied for funding from ACOA to review its current situation and develop a strategic plan for the future. The first meeting was held on Tuesday October 1, 2019. The consultant company that has been hired is Knightsbridge Marketing Consulting of Nova Scotia. They have experience with the Wild Blueberry industry and **will be consulting with all industry stakeholders**. We expect to have this project completed by the end of 2019 or early 2020.

The WBANA Canada 2018-19 year end financials are with the auditor and we expect to have audited statements available for the WBANA Canada/ WBANA US joint Board meetings on Thursday October 17th, 2019 in Bangor Maine. Once the Board has reviewed and approved, they will be shared with Producer Associations.

WBANA Canada plans to attend producers fall meetings in all growing areas and will be available to answer questions and make presentations if requested.



Fresh Pack Initiatives

As we mentioned at the Winter Meeting and again at the Field Day, WBPANS is co-operating with NSDA on a number of projects over the next two years to develop the fresh fruit and premium frozen fruit retail side of our industry, as well as continuing to encourage the further development of value-added wild blueberry food products. There will be further announcements on this in the coming weeks and a full overview of the project during the business meeting part of the AGM on Friday morning, November 15th. **One of the main objectives of this program is to work with and assist growers who have already made an investment and commitment to the fresh wild blueberry market.** One of the first steps will be to survey the current fresh packers to get a sense of the scope of the fresh market and the challenges to growing the business. We have engaged **Yvonne Thyssen-Post, of ThyAgrissen Consulting**, an experienced and highly-respected advisor well-known to many in our industry, to undertake a confidential, one-on-one survey over the next couple of months. She will then compile and summarize the results for presentation to the respondents and other interested growers in a focus group session mid-winter, where there will be further opportunity for input and to give direction to further develop the fresh market.

At this stage, we are compiling a list of the fresh packers for Yvonne's survey, but we are far from satisfied that our list is anywhere near complete. **If you are a fresh packer or are considering getting into it, please contact the WBPANS office by phone or email so we can put you on the list to be part of the survey and focus group** (telephone: 902-662-3306 or email: info@nswildblueberries.com). Again, the survey is confidential and individual responses will not be shared. Thanks on advance.



Wild Blueberry Innovation Challenge

As we mentioned previously, as part of the same co-operative agreement with NSDA, WBPANS has funding in place to support two more years of the successful new wild blueberry consumer food products challenge that we ran last year. In the coming weeks we will be announcing the opening of this competition-based funding opportunity to assist Nova Scotia companies in the development and test marketing of new wild blueberry products, processes, new packaging or other activities to grow and diversify our industry. This initiative will also be presented in more detail at the AGM, but it is not too soon to start working on proposals if new product or process development is part of your business plan.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN:

- June 21-26 Peter Rideout attended the International Blueberry Organization Conference in BC
- July 18 - WBPANS Field Day, Springhill, NS
- Aug. 2— WBPANS Executive met with Minister Colwell in his East Preston office
- Aug. 16— Peter Rideout attended a China Trade Reception in Halifax
- Aug. 27— Peter Rideout attended the Minister Colwell's Trade Dinner in Halifax
- Aug. 28 - WBPANS staff met in Debert with Alice Pugsley & Greg Connell to discuss promotion activities
- Sept. 24— WBPANS Board meeting in Debert
- Sept. 24 – Industry/Government working committee meeting in Debert
- Oct. 1— Peter Rideout met with WBANA staff in Debert
- Oct. 3 - WBPANS staff conference call with PricewaterhouseCoopers staff
- Oct. 7— WBPANS Committee meetings in Debert
- Oct. 15— Peter Rideout met with Greg Connell for AGM planning
- Oct. 16& 17 Peter Rideout attended WBANA AGM in Bangor
- Oct. 30— WBPANS Board meeting in Debert

2019 MEETING DATES

WBPANS AGM	November 13, 14, 15, 2019— 150 Willow Street, Best Western Glengarry, Truro
NSFA Annual Meeting	November 28 & 29, 2019—Best Western Glengarry, Truro
Scotia Horticultural Congress	January 27 & 28, 2020, Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville

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