

Wild Blueberry Newsletter



January 2009

New Electronic Wild Blueberry Newsletter

I would like to thank everyone who has returned their newsletter request form! If you do not return your form to us by February 15, 2009, this will be your LAST newsletter! If you would like to continue receiving the newsletter by email, please complete our online form at www.wildblueberries.maine.edu/newsletter-form.html. If you do not have Internet or email access and would like to continue receiving the newsletter by mail, please complete the enclosed form and mail it to Phoebe Nylund, University of Maine, 5755 Nutting Hall, Orono, ME 04469- 5755.

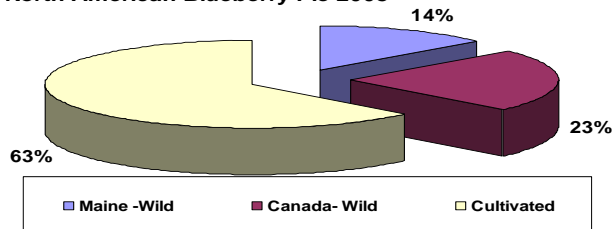
Maine Wild Blueberry Crop 2008

Maine's 2008 wild blueberry crop, as reported by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, totaled 89.95 million pounds of which 550,000 pounds were fresh. This is the second largest crop on record, only exceeded by the 110.99 million pound crop of 2000, and is well above the five year average of 69 million pounds.

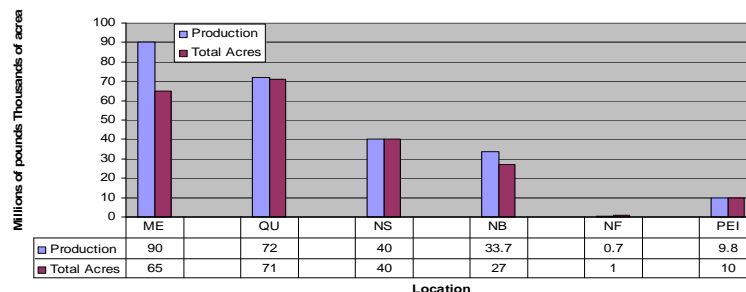
In Maine we had a wet fall in 2007 and good snow cover overwinter, so little winter injury was seen. The dry weather during pollination increased the potential crop and reduced any loss from mummy berry and blossom blight disease, which was observed as light infection in the fields this year. An abundance of native pollinators were observed in the fields this year. Anthony Jadczyk indicated we had 67,698 hives managed by migratory operations and about 1600 resident hives used for blueberry pollination in 2008 for a total of 69,288 hives in the state for pollination. Maine growers have come a long way with respect to honey bee usage over the last 25 years. Overall, bee quality was good to excellent but Tony did investigate several complaints of poor quality. At Blueberry Hill Farm, precipitation has been quite good at three to four inches each month and over seven inches in August. Cool temperatures in the spring delayed initial berry development but early moisture and good pollination resulted in a larger fruit size. The dry weather during the first part of July set the plants back and the cool wet weather we had through mid-August delayed crop ripening and reduced the potential for a bumper crop. The constant rain throughout August and into September reduced the fruit quality and resulted in shutdowns but kept the fruit size and yield up on many fields. Maine's contribution to the total North American blueberry crop was 14%.

The Maine Wild Blueberries NAAS report may be found at: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/nh/0901wbb.pdf>

North American Blueberry Pie 2008



Wild Blueberry Production and Acres 2008



A Member of the University of Maine System

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Canadian Wild Blueberry Crop

The wild blueberry crop in Canada was 156 million pounds, which is well above the five-year average of 123 million pounds. Quebec's crop was a record at 72 million pounds despite the cool temperatures and excessive rainfall, and is well above the five-year average of 55 million pounds. The crop in Nova Scotia was above average at 40 million pounds compared to its five-year average of 33.9 million pounds. There was excellent bloom, but there was a cool spell during pollination that may have reduced fruit set and there was above average rains in August which hindered harvest. The crop in New Brunswick at 33.575 million pounds was a record for the province and well above the five year average of 24 million pounds. The weather was good and the New Brunswick beekeepers had better overwintering success this past year, and along with the importation of colonies from Quebec and Ontario, an adequate number of colonies were present in the fields. The crop increase is also attributed to the increase in the number of acres coming into production, which is expected to continue to increase the average crop. The lack of winter kill, good pollination weather, an adequate supply of bees, and ample summer rainfall all contributed to the bumper crop of 9.8 million pounds in Prince Edward Island, which exceeds the five-year average of 8.6 million pounds. Crop figures for Newfoundland are at 0.6 million pounds vs. the five-year average of 1.1 million pounds; this decrease is attributed to the lack of labor to harvest the crop.

Cultivated Blueberries

Total reported cultivated production in the United States reported by the USDA was 191.86 million pounds fresh and 156.8 million pounds processed for a total crop of 348.9 million pounds. In addition British Columbia, Canada had an average estimated cultivated crop of 70 million pounds despite the increase in the acreage. Michigan/Indiana had 113.8 million pounds which represents a bumper crop and greatly exceeds the 94.6 million pounds harvested in 2007. In New Jersey the crop was 59 million pounds, which was also slightly ahead of last year's crop of 54 million pounds. The crop on the Pacific Coast (CA, OR, WA) was reported at 89.1 million pounds which is slightly less than last year's crop of 91.9 million pounds. The Southern States' (AL, AR, FL, GA, MS, NC) crop was 84.5 million pounds, which is considerably more than the 76.1 million pounds in 2007. The total North American crop (wild and cultivated) is 665 million pounds, which exceeds the 535.8 million pounds harvested in 2007. (Source of US crop data: NASS/USDA, Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts 2008 Preliminary Summary, January 2009, pages 30-32) See: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/NoncFruNu/NoncFruNu-01-23-2009.pdf>

Wild Blueberry Spring Meeting Dates Set

The spring wild blueberry meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 18th in Waldoboro and Thursday, March 19th in Ellsworth from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and on Saturday, March 21st in Machias from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Details on the location and program will be included in the February 2009 *Wild Blueberry Newsletter* and on our website www.wildblueberries.maine.edu/calendar.html.

Sincerely,



David E. Yarborough
Extension Blueberry Specialist

Wild blueberry fact sheets, past newsletters, contacts, resource links, calendar of events, and more can be found at the wild blueberry website: www.wildblueberries.maine.edu

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