



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

MAY, 2005

Volume 5, Issue 2

PCR Testing is Underway, Root Rot Beware!

The hurdles are crossed and the lab is ready to receive your PCR samples. Sample kits are available in the WRRRC office, at WSU/Whatcom County, and from Peerbolt Crop Management in SW WA.

The Raspberry Commission is encouraging you to take advantage of this opportunity to more accurately identify the actual cause of poor plant performance. The PCR test is a much more accurate

method of testing for *Phytophthora* root rot in both fields and root stock.

A fact sheet on correct sampling and submission procedures for this survey has been prepared. Growers will take samples, (or arrange for samples to be taken) and submit coded but anonymous samples for testing by a laboratory at Oregon State University.

Here's how this program will work:

- About \$10,000 will be needed to pay for overhead, seasonal labor and lab set up costs.
- The rest, over \$30,000, is earmarked to go directly to subsidize the testing costs for raspberry growers.
- At the cost of \$100 per test and a 50/50 split of the cost with each participating grower, this is enough for around 600 individual tests. Checks made out to the WA Red Raspberry Commission for \$50 of the sample cost must accompany the sample.
- There are about 170 assessment paying growers in Washington and the commission has devised a distribution of these subsidized tests so that each grower can turn in a minimum of 2 samples each for testing. The rest of the subsidized tests would then be allocated according to the acreage of the grower.



Photo by Tom Peerbolt

The results of these tests will be kept anonymous on the grower level but will be made available by county so that overall distribution of the disease can be made public. Please participate! This will help both you as a grower and the industry as a whole. Contact Craig MacConnell, email: cbmac@wsu.edu, phone (360) 676-6736 or Tom Peerbolt, email: tom@peerbolt.com, phone (503) 289-7287 for more information.

Promotion Program Explores Strategic Partnerships

The Promotion Committee is refocusing the goals and efforts of our promotion program. We are keenly aware that our small promotion budget cannot conduct a large national or international promotion campaign. Rather, it must be targeted on specific audiences and opportunities. The key question is which audience and which opportunity is the best use of our funds.

We have been actively exploring cooperative promotion efforts with other berry organizations. We sense that we have much more to gain than to lose from regional, or even national promotion efforts which would build on the strengths of multiple berries.

An opportunity to build on this idea presents itself in June. Oregon State University and Berry Works have organized an International Berry Health Benefits Symposium in Corvallis June 13-14. This will be an opportunity for those interested in learning more about the positive health message surrounding berries. Registration for the conference is available by contacting our office or online at: www.oregonstate.edu/dept/foodsci/berryhealth.htm. We will participate and keep building on the cooperative idea.

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Calendar

June 13-14 - International Berry Health Benefits Symposium, Corvallis - 170+ berry experts from around the world
Late June - Field Day at Abbotsford - Chaim's variety trials are on display
June 30 - Field Day at Puyallup - Pat's varieties available for your inspection,
July 6, 2-3pm - Field day at Sakumas - machine harvest trials of 2003 planting, evaluation of 2004 planting
July 6, 3-5pm - Mt. Vernon Station Open House - view berry trials, meet new small fruit plant physiologist
July 11 - Field Day at Randy Honcoop - machine harvest trials of 2002 planting and view 2005 planting
Late August - Field Day at Vancouver - good time to reflect on 2005 harvest and identify major research issues for 2006
September 7 - WRRRC Board Meeting - at location TBD in Skagit Valley

News Notes

New Small Fruit Plant Physiologist hired: WSU had three outstanding candidates for the new small fruit researcher position at the Mt. Vernon Station. We are pleased to report that Tom Walters, currently at Sakuma Brothers, has been selected for the Plant Physiologist position. He should be on board by late summer. Tom is eager to work with the growers in this new position. He observes that "I know some of you already from my work with Sakuma Bros. and am looking forward to meeting many more of you. Hopefully, we can get together this summer to discuss how the position can best serve you. I want to see this position help raspberry growers be more profitable with better knowledge of cropping systems and individual varieties' needs. I'd also like to look at how water stress at different times effects flower initiation and development."

Small Fruit Plant Pathologist Position eliminated: The position vacated by Dr. Pete Bristow has been eliminated. WSU Plant Pathology chair, Dr. Tim Murray, cites cuts from both federal and state sources as the reason. The WRRRC has been working closely with WSU and our partners in the Blueberry, Strawberry, and Cranberry Commissions to find a way to make up for this critical loss. We believe we are making progress. There will undoubtedly be a cost to the commissions to keep a pathology position available to our growers. But we recognize that the cost of not having these services is too high to ignore.

Supreme Court Upholds the Commodity Commission System: The fate of Commodity Commissions in the US has been quite uncertain lately. The primary challenge has come from those who argue that to be compelled to participate, and fund, these commissions is to compromise free speech. The counter argument has been that the only way to speak credibly for an industry is to speak on behalf of all its members not just a few self selected ones. Recent court decisions have bounced between these two arguments. The US Supreme Court just weighed in on the Beef Checkoff case with a ruling that favors the continued existence of commissions like the WRRRC. You can find the arguments and the decision at: <http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/03-1164.ZS.html>.

The WRRRC will look closer at the decision and its implications before making decisions about proposing another revision of our administrative code like those we proposed last year.

Machine Harvest Trials Need your Input: WRRRC has been working with the WSU and Ag Canada raspberry breeding programs to evaluate machine harvestability of new raspberry varieties. The Field days this summer are a great opportunity to communicate your desires for the traits you'd like to see in the new varieties that are being developed. Here is what you will see at each location:

2002 Randy Honcoop - 70 raspberries planted, including Cascade Delight and Cascade Nectar. This planting includes: 6 cultivars, 16 BC selections and 48 WSU selections. Plots of some selections have been cut down based on their performance in 2004 or disease status.

2003 Sakuma Bros - 91 raspberries planted, including Cascade Bounty, Cascade Dawn, Cascade Nectar, Chilliwack, Chemainus, Coho, Malahat and Qualicum. This planting includes: 14 cultivars, 23 BC selections, 51 WSU selections and 3 NY selections. Plots of some selections have been cut down based on their performance in 2004 or disease status.

2004 Sakuma Bros - 78 raspberries planted. This planting will not be harvested in 2005.

2005 Randy Honcoop - 90 raspberries planted. This was planted this month.