



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

APRIL, 2006

Volume 6, Issue 1

WRRC MARKETING STRATEGY DEVELOPING

Why are red raspberry markets so flat when blueberry markets are so vibrant? We have a product that is just as tasty and every bit as healthy. Yet the per capita consumption of blueberries is rising rapidly and raspberry consumption is actually decreasing.

The Washington Red Raspberry Commission (WRRC) recognizes the answer to this question has many dimensions but that one of the big differences has been an effective marketing strategy which is present in blueberries. We have struggled to develop a clear and well-funded message to support raspberry marketing.

The WRRC is cooperating with the BC Raspberry industry and has hired Rodger Wasson to develop a Marketing Strategy for our industry. Rodger has a long history of involvement with agricultural organizations across the nation and most recently headed the California Strawberry Commission. He is well positioned to provide perspective and potential partners.

Rodger's task will be to: 1) research existing conditions - determining existing and potential markets and identifying nutritional and nutraceutical opportunities; 2) identify markets, products, partners, and strategies which are likely to have the most immediate and positive impact; and 3) develop feedback loop which will provide the WRRC with a method of evaluating our marketing activities and deciding which ideas to prioritize.

Rodger will be meeting with both buyers and sellers of red raspberries over the next three months to help us develop this strategy. Your experiences in the market are needed to help inform this effort. Rodger will be in your area in the very near future. Help us to make this effort the very best it can be by providing us your opinions and experiences.

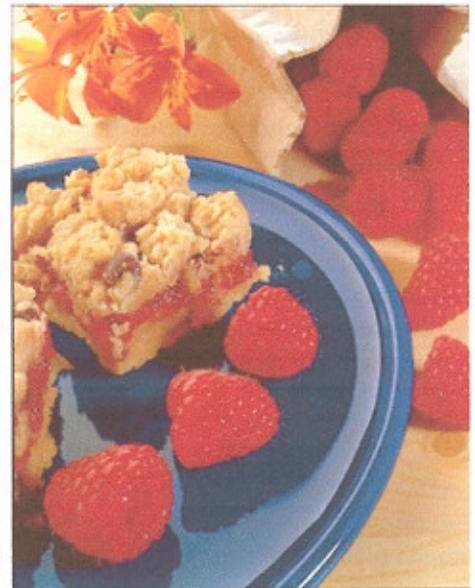
Marketing Meetings

Lynden

Homestead Farms - April 18, 7 pm

Woodland

Oak Tree Restaurant - May 1, 7 pm



TO PICK OR NOT TO PICK THAT IS THE QUESTION - by Darryl Ehlers

Many of us are busy cultivating, raising wires, spraying and preparing harvesters and want to ignore when to start harvest. Some watch for others starting to position their machines. It depends on the variety when you start. Some varieties hang on till they rot. Others say, PICK ME, before I drop on the ground. Pay a mind to the weather report, the time zone you chose may be at a four day window of rain. If you disregard the forecast, you may get to pick substandard fruit or pick the fruit directly to the ground.

Most varieties have what I call bird berries—fruit that ripen earlier than the rest of the plant's fruit set. Maybe there was a hiccup in the weather earlier in the spring that caused this. Bird berries do next to nothing by volume, make you no money, and can reduce your crop by tearing up the bushes by having the machine in too early.

I say take a basket and walk down the row picking a snack for lunch. If you find you are moving down the row and find ripe fruit that is not pink or takes a larger than normal pull to remove it from the stem you are two days or better from harvest. Repeat this process every two days.

If rain is in the forecast next week, pick a time that is ahead of the rain taking into consideration your three day waiting period for bifenthrin clean up sprays. Some times this begins to be a head game and most people have to break into the fields early to break the fields up into sections so not all has to be harvested on the same day with waiting periods between. This makes better use of your harvester and keeps your harvesting constant and cuts your headaches in half. CONGRATULATIONS YOU ARE NOW HARVESTING!

WHEN TO STOP

Imagine you are on a DOWN escalator walking up. Remember usually no one sprays during harvest, because you had everything in ship shape prior to harvest and the restrictions are high and value of sprays are low. The harvest may go for 30 to 45 days depending on variety or mixture of varieties. We do all this till bugs are building in numbers and plant diseases are building caused by weather or machine harvester plant damage. If bugs and diseases are taking your plants down you are destroying next year's crop by continuing harvest for petty production. If your field is clean and in good shape, the price is \$1.00 per pound and you pick a pallet of fruit or better per machine, then I say fine. The amount you beat the bush depends on volume and the price of berries.

Remember you have to raise your canes and wires back up to give yourself one or two clean up sprays to prepare the next years crop. This all takes time. Don't pick and walk away if you plan to stay in the fruit business. If you harvest the tidbits the bugs and plant diseases are devouring your next crop.

The escalator is now on the bottom, you can turn around and get OFF. You have now finished your harvest, now get the pruners out and sharpen them for fall pruning.

**Washington Red Raspberry
Commission**

Promotion, Fair Trade, and Research
assistance for Growers

Phone: 503-289-7287

Email: info@peerbolt.com

www.peerbolt.com

www.nwipm.info or www.nwipm.com

Board of Directors

Rob Dhaliwal, Pres. John Ozuna Darryl Ehlers
Erin Thoeny, Vice-Pres Jon Cotton John Vander Veen
Glenn Sakuma, Treas. Randy Honcoop Bill Dallas

Henry Bierlink, Executive Director Tom Peerbolt, Research Coordinator

Calendar

May 30 - June 1 - International Raspberry Association meeting in Serbia

September 6 - WRRRC Board Meeting - at WSU Mt. Vernon

November 1 - WRRRC Board Meeting - in Lynden

December 6 - WRRRC Board Meeting - in Lynden

Field Days (some dates yet to be scheduled)

Abbotsford - Chaim's variety trials are on display

July 13 - Field Day at Puyallup - Pat's variety trials are on display

Field Day at Sakumas - machine harvest trials of 2004 planting

Trials at Randy Honcoop were planted in 2005 and 2006 and will be ready for viewing in 2007-2008.

WRRRC encourages additional growers to host these trials. Contact Randy Honcoop, Research Chair, if you are willing.

News Notes

New Research Results on Antioxidants from Plant Research International, Wageningen, Netherlands

Antioxidants are believed to have substantial health benefits and raspberries in particular are a good source. In fact, raspberries may have 10 times more antioxidants than tomatoes or broccoli. Further, raspberries contain some specific antioxidants that are found almost nowhere else.

Because raspberries spoil rapidly, the study discusses the effect of storage and processing on the antioxidant content of the fruit. While flash freezing in liquid nitrogen and storage at -20C destroys much of the vitamin C, the antioxidant capacity remains. Processing the berry into jams may alter some of the antioxidants, however most of the valuable compounds remain. (Source: News-Medical.Net)

WRRRC Board Votes to Pursue Federal Marketing Order

A dilemma facing the WRRRC has been that it is difficult to justify spending large amounts of money on creating new markets for raspberries when it becomes apparent that many, if not most, of the markets will buy raspberries off-shore. Blueberry growers solved this problem by establishing a federal Research and Promotion Order in 2001. This order mandates that imported blueberries pay the same level of assessments towards research and promotion program that domestic blueberry growers do. This allowed the US Highbush Blueberry Council to add nearly 1/2 million dollars to these programs in 2005. Blueberry growers are voting to renew this Order this fall. The WRRRC Board hopes to explore a similar Order for raspberries. More details will be forthcoming and this will be among the discussion items at the Marketing Meetings this spring. There is a firm commitment to involve all growers in this discussion.

Irrigation Systems Evaluation Training Scholarships offered

In cooperation with the Washington Blueberry and Strawberry Commissions, the Raspberry Commission is paying the way for six industry people to be trained in evaluating irrigation systems. The training class is at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, June 12-16, 2006. If you or someone in your organization is interested, contact Henry Bierlink at 360-354-8767 for an application. This is an innovative attempt to use commission funds to directly benefit the industry by increasing grower knowledge in a critical factor in our production system. Project advisors Dr. Tom Walters and Dr. Dave Bryla will also use this program to help identify future research needs in water systems management.

Phytophthora Root Rot Survey Still Available

Last season the commission, with matching funds from the Washington State Commission for Pesticide Registration, provided growers with an opportunity for testing their plants and fields for Phytophthora using a new, highly accurate testing method called PCR. This opportunity is still available. Contact WRRRC for a testing kit. The industry is in need of a much better understanding of this devastating disease. Crop budgets indicate that Ridomil costs average over 9% of the cash costs of producing raspberries. Integrating this particular test into our industry stands a good chance of being a cornerstone in controlling the spread of Phytophthora root rot. Grower cooperation is going to still be needed to complete this project. Stay tuned.

2006 Research Program -Expanding Resources

The research projects funded by the commission this year take advantage of the expanding opportunities for partnering with other regions and using a growing pool of resources. They include 1) A project by Dr. Tom Forge (Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre, British Columbia) looking at how cover crops and nitrogen influence soil health. 2) Nematicur replacement trials with Dr. Jack Pinkerton (USDA) and Dr. Katerina Riga (WSU, Prosser). 3) Identifying genetic markers for phytophthora root rot in breeding program selections with Dr. Courtney Weber (Cornell University, Rochester, New York) and 4) Development of value added dried raspberry products with Dr. Carter Cleary (WSU, Pullman).