



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

MARCH, 2013

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To: Members of the Washington Berry Industry
From: Alan Schreiber, Director, WA Blueberry Commission
Henry Bierlink, Director, WA Red Raspberry Commission
Re: Washington Berry Food Safety Training

Buyers of Washington berries and berry products are increasingly requiring growers be third party certified and that they meet minimum requirements for food safety. The minimum standard for this is GAP (Good Agricultural Practices). One becomes third party certified by passing an inspection by a Washington State Department of Agriculture inspector. Several of our farms have already become farm third party certified according to GAP standards and while the process itself is not particularly difficult it does require you and your employees to have some training and go through the process to bring your farm up to a certain standard. The Produce Safety Rule of the Food Safety Modernization Act will require growers to implement these standards.

In order to help you meet these new standards the Washington Blueberry and Red Raspberry Commissions will host a series of food safety meetings around the state. The training will have capabilities for Spanish translation at all locations and Punjabi at the Lynden location.

Morning Session- How to get the farm GAP certified

This session will target growers and/or farm managers. 9:00am – 12:00pm

Afternoon Session- Training the designated trainer

Target will be crew chiefs, employee managers and key employees. 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Lunch will be provided for attendees of the morning and afternoon sessions. Lunch is at noon.

Locations:

Prosser - March 19
WSU- IAREC
24106 N. Bunn Road

Vancouver - March 20
WSU - Clark Co. Extension
1919 NE 78th Street

Mt. Vernon - March 27
WSU-NWREC
16650 Hwy. 536

Lynden - March 28
NW WA Fairgrounds - Rotary Bldg.
1775 Front Street

RSVP is required!

We need to get a good head count for each location to order lunch and request enough seating. Please RSVP the number of attendees for your business by emailing abragg@centurytel.net or call 509-266-4300 by **2 days** prior to the session you plan to attend. If you have any questions please contact us at the information below.

Please note: The commissions will fund only 2 employees per farm/company. Every employee over the limit will incur a \$20 charge. Please let us know when RSVP ing how many will be attending.



Calendar

Contact the WRRRC office for information on each of these upcoming educational opportunities

- March 3 - Botrytis Workshop - WRRRC
- March 20 - Berry MRL Workshop - WSU Mt. Vernon
- April 10 - WRRRC Board Meeting - Puyallup
- June 18-20 - Berry Health Symposium - Charlotte, NC
- September 11 - WRRRC Board Meeting - Mt. Vernon
- October 23 - WRRRC Board Meeting - Lynden

Washington Red Raspberry

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Research assistance for
Growers*

News Notes

USRRC Poised to Meet

We continue to wait for the final pronouncement from USDA that will initiate the functions of the newly created United States Red Raspberry Council. Throughout the last months USDA has been obtaining the needed signatures to approve the initial board of directors for the USRRC. Our growers voted on the WA representatives to this board last fall but we have yet to be informed of the final results of that vote. We expect to hear very soon and we remain hopeful that the initial meeting of this board can occur prior to this summer's harvest. You should expect to pay the increased 1 cent assessment this summer which, matched with assessments on imported raspberries, will provide the USRRC with the significant investments that will strengthen consumer demand for raspberries.

WRRRC Pursues Legislative Changes

The WA State Legislature is considering a bill (HB 1770) that was proposed by the WRRRC. The bill would change state law to allow commodity commissions like the WRRRC to appoint non-voting Advisory Board members to our board of directors. Representative Vincent Buys has sponsored the bill for us and we are hopeful that we will have this authority once the Legislature adjourns in May. The WRRRC has a series of proposed changes to our governing documents that we will be discussing with the industry following the harvest. Our goal is to make our state commission the most effective and efficient possible and to work constructively with the new national raspberry board to promote raspberries and address challenges that increase the costs you incur to produce them.

Berry Health Symposium in Charlotte in June

Washington red raspberries are delicious and nutritious, packed full of ellagic acid, vitamins, antioxidants and fiber, and produced on some of the most beautiful farmland in the United States. Washington accounts for nearly 95 percent of the U.S. production of processed red raspberries, at about 70,000,000 pounds per year. Berries are increasingly viewed as having a profound impact against the diseases of aging including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and age related mental decline. Hear the evidence at the **2013 Berry Health Benefits Symposium** to be held June 18-20 in Charlotte, North Carolina.. Visit our website <http://www.red-raspberry.org/> to learn more.



MRL Workshop for Berry Exporters

Growers who are involved in international exports have come to realize that a major constraint on how they grow their berries is the maximum residue limit (MRL) that is established by the importing country for the crop protection tools common to growing berries. The Washington Blueberry Commission is hosting an upcoming workshop on MRLs. The meeting will be held March 20th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at Best Western Cotton Tree Convention Center (2300 Market Street, Mt. Vernon). The WRRRC is assisting in promoting this workshop and our growers are welcome to participate. The objectives of the meeting are 1) bring exporters and growers who produce for the export market up to speed on the latest developments on MRLs, 2) learn what is being done to help the industry with MRLs and how the industry can take advantage of these programs and 3) communicate back to the berry commissions on what needs to be doing in regards to MRLs and developing export markets.

Attendees will be charged \$20 to partially defray the cost of the meeting. **Please RSVP by March 17th** to the Washington Blueberry Commission office (abragg@centurytel.net, 509-266-4300).

WRRRC Proposes Several Projects for Funding under WA State Specialty Crop Block Grants

One of the dramatic improvements of the 2008 Farm Bill was the establishment of a Block Grant program to support "specialty crops" like berry production. Federal funds are distributed proportionally to states with significant specialty crop production. Washington State is in the top 5 in the nation in this category resulting in over \$3 million coming to support issues facing growers administered by the State Department of Ag. The WRRRC has proposed several projects for funding this year:

- A joint project with the OR Commission to enhance sales of processed NW caneberries as an ingredient to food manufacturers/food service providers.
- A joint project with the WA Blueberry Commission to Control Resistant Botrytis on Washington berries.
- A project with WSU and USDA/ARS to advance Mechanizing red-raspberry pruning.
- A joint project with the WA Blueberry Commission to advance Food Safety Education in Washington berries.
- Support for a WSU project examining Decline Issues in Red Raspberries.