



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

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Raspberry Growers Win!

Raspberry growers finally heard the news they were hoping to hear in early July. Over 88% of the ballots received on a referendum to form a United States Red Raspberry Council (USRRC) were in favor of the proposal. The vote culminates 7 years of patience and deliberation as the WRRRC formed this idea, kept perfecting the proposal, and ultimately were rewarded with success.

We expect the order to be in place by fall and a board formed by the end of the year. We'll consider the WRRRC's next steps at our September 21st board meeting. We benefit from hearing your ideas for both the USRRC and the WRRRC as we seek to establish the best working relationship between the state and federal councils so that the grower's interests may be efficiently advanced.

Are You Satisfied with the Raspberry Varieties You're Planting?

Tom Peerbolt, WRRRC Research Coordinator

2010		2009		2008		2007		2006	
Meeker	60.0%	Meeker	55.8%	Meeker	58.5%	Meeker	65.2%	Meeker	68.0%
Wakefield	9.8%	Cascade Bounty	12.2%	Saanich	7.7%	Saanich	9.4%	Cascade Bounty	4.1%
Chемainus	8.5%	Chемainus	9.7%	Willamette	4.1%	Cascade Bounty	4.0%	Chемainus	2.5%
Cascade Bounty	5.6%	Saanich	9.2%	Chемainus	4.0%	Willamette	2.8%	Coho	2.3%
Willamette	4.9%	Wakefield	4.1%	Cascade Bounty	2.7%	Chемainus	1.9%	Willamette	1.3%

Totals include reported plant sales from Norcal Nursery, North American Plants, Northwest Plant Co, Nourse Farms and Spooner Farms.

The above table shows the top five processing raspberry variety plant sales in Washington state with their percentage of total state sales over the last five years. Primocane varieties and obvious fresh market varieties have been omitted.

There are a number of points regarding this chart:

- The percentage of Meeker in total sales is even higher if you go back the previous decade and further.
- A top tier research priority for the Washington Red Raspberry Commission for at least the last ten years has been the development of machine harvestable floricanе varieties for processing that are an improvement on Meeker.
- More grower assessment funds have been spent on this goal than any other research objective.
- In the public breeding programs there are arguably a number of 'promising' selections/varieties with improved root rot tolerance, fruit quality and yield improvements, and (maybe) RBDV resistance coming down the road, but there is no clear evidence as to when any variety will emerge to alter the present situation.
- We presently are in a dynamic, changing situation in which a number of factors are coming together to alter the choices and costs associated with raspberry variety selection. Some of these factors are:



Dr. Tom Walters discusses new raspberry varieties at the July Berry Day in Mt Vernon

1. The emergence of Wakefield as a proprietary variety.
2. The likely continued growth of private raspberry breeding programs whose business models depend on the application of intellectual property principals to be viable.
3. The likelihood that our WSU public breeding program will be facing continued budget restrictions.
4. The amount of funding that the Commission can contribute to support variety development efforts is not likely to get any bigger than it has been in the last few years.

Given this environment it is time to re-assess how the WRRRC can best use its resources to meet the needs of its growers. We have considerable resources and expertise within the industry, Washington State University, the USDA, and other regional groups, public and private, that are currently working on raspberry breeding—how can we make best use of all these resources?

This off season, the major goal of the Commission's production research committee and coordinator will be to take a long hard look at this situation. We still have the same pressing need for new, improved, and affordable varieties. What is the best way for us to get there from here? Let's put it all on the table and see what we can come up with. Any and all input is welcome, indeed it's needed.



Drs. Pat Moore and Chaim Kempler evaluate new raspberry varieties at the Sakuma Machine Harvest Trial

Washington Red Raspberry

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*Promotion, Fair Trade,
and Research assistance
for Growers*

News Notes

International Raspberry Organization 2012

The 8th IRO conference will be held in Abbotsford June 3-7. Plans are being made for the one day program and for raspberry tours in the Fraser Valley and in NW Washington. This is a good opportunity for growers to hear the highlights and challenges of your colleagues in Chile, Serbia, Poland, China, and other countries. Support businesses are encouraged to help sponsor a portion of this program and make your products known to an international raspberry audience. Contact us or Sharmin Gamiet at the RIDC office in Abbotsford for sponsorship packages.

December Berry Meetings Reformatted

The WRRRC and the WA Blueberry Commission are working with WSU to organize a two-day Small Fruit Conference and Trade Show in Lynden December 8-9. We expect over 200 berry growers from the northwest to participate in commission planning meetings, earn pesticide credits, and hear the results of berry marketing efforts. A Trade Show featuring new berry machinery and services will be a new feature. Learn more at www.lyndenagshow.com.

Farmer's Equipment will be the Premier sponsor at the Trade Show with People's Bank providing a Presenting sponsorship. Whatcom Farmer's Co-op and Elenbaas Company are Conference Room sponsors and Washington Tractor, Littau Harvester, Whatcom Manufacturing, Watertec, and Brim Tractor are providing exhibits. Several other companies have already booked booths at the Trade Show and more booths are available at the website.

Confirmed speakers at the Conference include US Rep. Rick Larsen reflecting on the federal government's nexus with berry farms, John Shelford detailing the international berry industry, and Bernadine Strik and Chad Finn reporting on the recent *Rubus Ribes Symposium* held in Serbia.

A Thursday evening Berry Industry Dinner featuring Rufus LaLone's entertaining "take" on weather forecasting will be an event you would regret missing. This dinner is being partially sponsored by NW Farm Credit Services and Bellingham Cold Storage.

Food Safety Update

Michigan State University published an article in the July edition of *Fruit Grower News* outlining Five ways to automatically fail a food safety audit. We recommend the article to you as you prepare for food safety audits. The five "no-no's" are 1) presence of an immediate food safety risk, 2) presence or evidence of rodents or excessive insects during packing or storing, 3) employee practices that jeopardize food safety, 4) falsification of records, and 5) not having a designated food safety person on staff and/or lack of a GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) manual. Let the wise be warned.

Nominations for WRRRC Board Recruited

Nominations for upcoming board positions will be received by the WA Dept. of Agriculture via phone on September 7th or by mail by September 12th. They will be contacting growers in Districts #1 (Whatcom) and #3 (Clark, Cowlitz) to be thinking about who you want to represent you. Ralph Minaker and Kristie Clark (District #1) and Kevin Philbrook (District #3) will complete their first terms and are eligible to be re-nominated. There are two vacant positions in District #2 (Central Sound and Olympia Peninsula). We encourage you to be part of the nominating and election process so that you can keep your Raspberry Board responsive to your top priorities.

Production Reports Due

The Grower and Processor Report Forms are being mailed along with this newsletter. Please return your completed form to insure you are properly credited for your assessment dollars.

Disaster Aid May Be Available

Producers who experienced crop damage due to our spring/summer weather are encouraged to report to the nearest USDA FSA office as soon as possible. USDA will determine whether the disaster declaration requested by Gov. Gregoire is warranted, as well as administer all relevant disaster relief programs.

Calendar

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

September 21 - WRRRC Board Meeting, 1 pm - *WSU Mt. Vernon*

October 26 - WRRRC Board Meeting, 1 pm - *19th St. Fire Hall, Lynden*

December 1 - NW Small Fruit Center Conference - *Portland, OR*

December 7-9 - WSU Small Fruit Workshop, Lynden Ag Show, WRRRC Bd. Mtg. *Lynden*

June 3-7 - International Raspberry Organization Conference - *Abbotsford, BC*