



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

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Raspberry Growers Face Interesting Choices

The next six months will be a transition time for Washington Red Raspberry growers. The creation of the US Red Raspberry Council (USRRC) presents some interesting choices about how growers will choose to prioritize the issues that the USRRC and the WRRRC will be addressing in the next few years.

The WRRRC Board has been wrestling with the many challenges facing the raspberry industry and has been systematically addressing them. We have refocused our research and plant breeding efforts since 2002 and we are pleased that the results have provided us with effective crop protection tools, a focused and effective response to the SWD threat, and several promising new raspberry selections that are machine harvestable and less susceptible to viruses.

After an instructive and effective anti-dumping effort between 2001-2004 we turned our attention to developing a Strategic Marketing Plan in 2007. The Plan identified the need for investments in berry health research and opportunities to carry the message of great taste and nutrition to consumers and industrial food buyers. We are beginning to reap the benefits of these investments.

We realized that sustained investments in berry marketing would require more funds than the WRRRC had available. After the contentious anti-dumping effort we had established relationships with international competitors to a point where they agreed to help fund joint raspberry promotions to grow the market for all growers. The fairest way to do this proved to be establishing a National Research and Promotion Program similar to what blueberries did 10 years ago. The USRRC is the result. Both raspberries grown in the US and raspberries imported into the US will be contributing to market promotion.

Once the USRRC is functioning, hopefully by mid-2012, the WRRRC has some decisions to make. We need your feedback on the following questions and more. You are encouraged to talk to our Board members (*page 3*), our

Executive, Marketing, and Research Directors, and/or join us for our Annual Meeting and long range discussion at the Lynden Ag Show, 10:30 Thursday, December 8th.

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How do you feel about?

1. Cutting back the WRRRC ½ cent assessment since the USRRC will assume most promotional expenses.
2. Reorganizing the WRRRC Board to better match current production areas and possibly lower the number of board members.
3. What constitutes an effective Promotion/Marketing program? Are we on-track?
4. What are our current and future production research needs?
5. Is the lack of a berry pathologist a problem that concerns you? In light of shrinking federal and state budgets for research institutions can we fund a position between raspberries and blueberries? If so, how?
6. Will we face more research needs that our universities will not be able to meet?
7. Will we be able to support current researchers in a changing funding climate?
8. Should we move toward private research programs rather than public ones?
9. Is the WRRRC able to fund them on behalf of all growers or will this take the route of the private plant breeding programs?
10. Do our public plant breeding programs (WSU, Ag Canada, USDA/ARS) merit the \$80,000 annual investments we have been making in them? What are the consequences of lowering that investment?

The WRRRC Board realizes that easy answers to these questions are far from evident. We hope you provide us your ideas and ask your own questions about our future.

Lynden Ag Show - Small Fruit Conference
WRRRC Annual Meeting
December 8-9 - NW WA Fairgrounds

Next Steps in the Formation of the USRRC

The USDA in Washington DC has informed us that they expect the Final Rule establishing the United States Red Raspberry Council will be published in the Federal Register before the end of 2011. Once this is completed the new program is in place and the needed organizational activities will be initiated. 120 days will need to pass from the day the program is established until Customs will begin enforcing the collection of assessments on imported frozen raspberries.

We know that the WRRRC will be asked to submit a minimum of ten names of Washington raspberry growers who have agreed to allow their names to be nominated for the initial Council. Five of these growers will be appointed to the Council and the others will serve as alternates. The five WA growers will join one grower from Oregon, one grower representing frozen raspberry production in the rest of the nation, three importers of frozen raspberries, two foreign raspberry growers representing the leading importing countries (Canada and Chile), and one at-large member to be appointed by the other twelve.

We have been actively recruiting potential nominees for this Council as we understand that the success of the USRRC is dependent on establishing a strong board to direct this Council. We are delighted to advance the following ten Washington growers who have consented to be involved and to serve in whatever capacity they are needed to help direct this board.

Many of these individuals are well known by many growers. We hope the profiles below and their hopes for the future of the USRRC will give you a more complete idea of what the USRRC will be able to accomplish for the raspberry industry.

Jon Cotton, owner of Silver Star Farms Inc. near Vancouver, WA, has been in the berry farming business since 1979. He farms 115 acres of raspberries and realizes that the future of the raspberry growing industry in the Pacific Northwest demands we take proactive efforts to grow our market. He states that his goal for the USRRC is to “improve market conditions for red raspberries in such a way that it provides a sustainable and viable economic future for our industry.”

Adam Enfield, is a partner in Enfield Farms, a Whatcom County farm growing raspberries since 1978. They have approximately 500 acres in production. Along with farm duties Adam is also involved in operating a berry processing plant and in raspberry nursery and variety development at Northwest Plant. Adam also serves as the current Chair of the WRRRC. Adam notes that “the Federal board has the potential to really increase the demand for raspberries. I would like to see a very healthy future for raspberries because that is my family’s livelihood. I think my experience to date on the state commission will be beneficial because I have been involved in the process of forming this council for the last 5 years.” Adam sums up the goal of the USRRC as simply to “Increase raspberry consumption.”

Brad Rader, general manager of Rader Farms, Inc., manages over 500 harvested acres of raspberries with 100 acres coming into production. The family business has been in raspberry production since the 1950’s first in the Puyallup area, now in Whatcom County. Brad also serves as the sales/marketing lead for Rader Farms and oversees the processing plant. Brad believes the USRRC will serve to unify a sometimes fractious raspberry industry that will allow us to set a direction for the future of our industry. Brad’s goal for the USRRC is to “be part of a team that will work together with all red raspberry producers to build a plan for the future. We have a great deal of work ahead to catch up.”

Erin Thoeny, is a partner in Thoeny Farms, Inc., in Woodland, WA. This family farm grows raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries for processors that are located in Oregon. The Thoenys have been growing raspberries since 2000 and currently grow about 70 acres. They also grow sweet corn, peas, and green beans for processing and some wheat. Thoeny Farms grows fresh market carrots sold wholesale to Portland and Seattle markets. Erin also sells at several farmers markets in SW Washington. Erin is “interested in serving on the US Red Raspberry Council, as I wish to represent a grower viewpoint on the board from a minority growing region of Washington State. My main goal is to try to increase the demand for red raspberries in order maintain a steady and increasing price to avoid the dramatic price fluctuations from year to year.”

Frank De Vries, owner of Berry Acres Ag LLC, has been growing raspberries west of Lynden since 1981. The farm currently has 275 acres in production. Frank also operates processing plants for both IQF and bulk and a receiving station for juice berries destined for SVZ. He also directs an industrial maintenance business with regional oil refineries as his major clientele. Frank is motivated to serve on the board by the opportunity to learn about the world-wide raspberry industry and to apply some of the lessons he has learned in raspberry marketing so that we capitalize on the health aspects of raspberries to promote increased demand for our product.

Rob Dhaliwal, owns Samson Estates Winery and Samson Farms, a 350 acre raspberry and blueberry farm. Rob is a recent chair of the WRRRC and was very active in getting the proposal to form the USRRC organized. Rob is also familiar

Next Steps in the Formation of the USRRC *(continued)*

with the operation of a USDA Research and Promotion Program by serving as an alternate board member on the US Highbush Blueberry Council. Rob and his family have been growing berries in Whatcom County since 1985. He also operates a packing plant and has berry marketing experience. His goal for the USRRC is to “help create a stable and profitable raspberry industry”.

Rolf Haugen, owner of Haugen's Raspberries is farming 33 acres and has been in the raspberry growing business for 30 years. In addition to the farm Rolf is the manager of North West Berry Co-op that has 52 grower members which handled close to 15 million pounds of raspberries this past season. Rolf makes it clear that “we have a large amount of raspberries to move every year. We have a budget for marketing but it is not big enough to make as much difference as we need to. Over the years we have seen marketing make a difference and it is time to make a difference again.” Rolf’s priority for the USRRC is to “make Raspberry be the exciting flavor in the market it used to be.”

Jon Maberry, is part of Maberry Packing, a Lynden based berry farm also growing strawberries and blueberries since 1973. They have 812 acres in production and also operate an IQF and bulk processing plant and are partners with Curt Maberry Farm in berry marketing. “Successful marketing is vital to our operation and industry as a whole. There is great potential to increase domestic demand if we can boost exposure and implement industry wide strategies to stabilize the markets” John observes. He has a goal for the USRRC of “ensuring low administration cost and increased exposure of red raspberry products through cost effective avenues.”

John Clark, owner of Clark's Berry Farm, Inc., currently farms 350 acres of raspberries near Lynden. He has been growing raspberries since 1982 and continues to also grow 50 acres of strawberries. Clark’s also process their own berries and some from neighbors in their bulk packing plant. John is “very concerned about the future of the raspberry industry and am very interested in learning about the world markets.” His priority for the USRRC is to “focus on promotion of red raspberries on a national scale which will hopefully lead to higher raspberry consumption.”

Mark Van Mersbergen, owner of Markwell Raspberries, has been farming north of Lynden since 1975. In addition to 65 acres of raspberries Mark operates a dairy farm and dairy genetics businesses. Mark has been growing raspberries since 1997 and has been an active member of the NW Berry Co-op. Mark looks forward to the success of the USRRC and expects it to “infiltrate new markets which will solidify prices for all grades of fruit”.

WRRC Board of Directors - with term expiration date, December 1 . . .

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Seat</u> | | <u>Year</u> | <u>Seat</u> | |
|-------------|-------------|---|--|-------------|---|
| 10 | 1 | Vacant - District #2 | 12 | 9 | Erin Thoeny |
| 13 | 2 | Adam Enfield, President Lynden 360-354-3019 adam@enfieldfarms.com | | | Woodland 360-225-7133 thoenyf@cni.net |
| 14 | 3 | Kristie Clark, Treasurer Lynden (360) 354-1294 clarksberryfarm@hotmail.com | 13 | 10 | Satpaul Neger– Mukhtiar Farms Mt Vernon 360-410-9300 ssneger@hotmail.com |
| 14 | 4 | Ralph Minaker Everson 360-966-5645 minakerfarm@aol.com | WSDA | 11 | Bill Dallas Olympia 360-902-1925 bdallas@agr.wa.gov |
| 12 | 5 | Kevin Philbrook Vancouver (360) 931-3543 k.philbrook@yahoo.com | WRRC Office | | |
| 12 | 6 | Richard Sakuma Burlington 360-757-1855 richards@sakumabros.com | Henry Bierlink, Executive Director <i>henry@red-raspberry.org</i> | | |
| 09 | 7 | Vacant - District #2 | Tom Peerbolt, Research Coordinator <i>tom@red-raspberry.org</i> | | |
| 13 | 8 | Kyle Haugen Lynden 360-815-1346 kylejhaugen@gmail.com | Tom Krugman, Marketing Director <i>tomk@red-raspberry.org</i> | | |
| | | | Hannah Parker, Office Manager 1796 Front Street Lynden, WA 98264 360-354-8767 fax 360-354-0948 info@red-raspberry.org www.red-raspberry.org | | |

WRRC Financial Report & Draft Budget

The following financial report & budget will be considered at the annual meeting Dec. 8th.

INCOME

| <u>Category</u> | <u>2011 Budget</u> | <u>2011 Projected</u> | <u>2012 Draft Budget</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Assessments | \$300,000 | \$350,000 | \$350,000 |
| Interest | \$4,000 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 |
| Grant Income | | | |
| Other income | | \$900 | \$750 |
| Total | \$304,000 | \$352,100 | \$351,950 |

EXPENSES

| <u>Category</u> | <u>2011 Budget</u> | <u>2011 Projected</u> | <u>2012 Draft Budget</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Promotion | \$184,266 | \$180,000 | \$117,500 |
| Research | \$61,266 | \$70,000 | \$0 |
| Publicity | \$123,000 | \$110,000 | \$117,500 |
| Research | \$165,000 | \$160,000 | \$134,450 |
| Administration | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$50,000 |
| Operations | \$30,000 | \$35,000 | \$30,000 |
| National Program/Fair | | | |
| Trade | \$105,000 | \$112,000 | \$5,000 |
| <i>Bond for R & P</i> | | | |
| <i>Election</i> | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$0 |
| <i>Misc. Expenses</i> | \$5,000 | \$12,000 | \$5,000 |
| Communications | \$10,000 | \$8,000 | \$10,000 |
| Crop Protection | \$5,000 | \$2,000 | \$5,000 |
| TOTAL | \$549,266 | \$547,000 | \$351,950 |
| Balance | (\$245,266) | (\$194,900) | \$0 |

2012 Production Research Priorities

#1 priorities

- Develop cultivars that are summer bearing, high yielding, winter hardy, machine-harvestable, disease resistant, virus resistant and have superior processed fruit quality.
- Understanding soil ecology and soil borne pathogens and their effects on plant health and crop yields.
- Soil fumigation techniques and alternatives to control soil pathogens, nematodes, and weeds.
- Fruit rot including pre harvest, post harvest, and/or shelf life.
- Evaluation of the life cycle and management options of the Spotted Wing Drosophila

#2 priorities

- Harvest contaminants and other problems stemming from the loss of longstanding insecticides.
- Weed management.
- Nutrient/Irrigation management.
- Viruses/crumby fruit.
- Mite management.

#3 priorities

- Product and Production Certification Systems - food safety & security, standards, traceability.
- Foliar & Cane Diseases – i.e. spur blight, yellow rust, cane blight, etc.
- Season extension: improve viability of fresh marketing.
- Labor saving cultural practices including mechanical pruning and tying techniques.
- Vertebrate pest management

Darryl's Corner - by Darryl Ehlers

In the last raspberry commission meeting there was a discussion about the future of our State assessments now that we have approved a National assessment. I am a strong advocate for reduced costs but this discussion has caused me to eat a little bit of crow. I thought everything was going to fly easy with the transition from the State commission to the National Council but it doesn't work that way. Growers have to let the all the chips fall at the speed of government. It appears the National Council won't be functioning on all cylinders until next fall.

It is suggested that plant breeding is done by our state to protect our varieties. Food safety (which includes chemical research) and promotion to be done nationally. Until the National council gets going the burden lays on us to maintain our momentum. Consequently, I believe we must retain the current level of assessment to cover cost of operation, until the transfer happens and we decide who is responsible for what.

A note of knowledge - in the past I have received \$1.85 per pound for raspberries. I also received 14 cents on the low side. Growers used to be happy to get 45 cents. We are now getting 70 to 80 cents a pound and producing a luxury crop that people can live without. It is time for us to beat the drum and not complain about assessment levels, but to promote our product to its full extent.

I do see after the new council gets moving, you will see either a reduction in your state costs or funding new services demanded by growers. After the smoke settles you will be the winner.



2011 Red Raspberry Production

| | Grower # | 2008 Pounds | 2009 Pounds | 2010 Pounds | 2011 Pounds | Increase | % of State Production |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Whatcom County | 102 | 48,165,935 | 58,875,993 | 54,287,694 | 66,332,000 | 22.2% | 91.8% |
| Central Puget Sound | 7 | 565,653 | 558,716 | 533,760 | 345,618 | -35.2% | 0.5% |
| Southwest WA | 13 | 2,376,855 | 3,015,165 | 2,915,464 | 3,369,313 | 15.6% | 4.7% |
| Skagit, Snohomish Counties | 18 | 2,209,952 | 1,818,917 | 2,013,282 | 2,185,882 | 8.6% | 3.0% |
| WA State Total | 140 | 53,318,395 | 64,268,791 | 59,750,199 | 72,232,813 | 20.9% | |
| Oregon | | 3,408,667 | 4,225,631 | 3,063,822 | 4,991,448 | 62.9% | |
| British Columbia | | 19,833,200 | 21,550,420 | 20,449,000 | 22,500,000 | 10.0% | |
| Northwest Total | | 76,560,262 | 90,044,842 | 83,263,021 | 99,724,261 | 19.8% | |

Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance Launches Website

The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA) - a national coalition of more than 120 farm organizations including the WRRRC - launched the educational website, StrongerAgriculture.org, as part of its 2012 Farm Bill efforts.

The specialty crop industry makes up nearly 50 percent of all U.S. farm gate value for plant agriculture. SCFBA is working with Congress to build on their previous investments in specialty crops in the 2008 Farm Bill. The 2012 Farm Bill represents an important opportunity to continue down a path that drives demand for specialty crop products and creates a more accurate balance in U.S. agriculture policy. Visitors can find: SCFBA's 2012 Farm Bill policy priorities and recommendations; transcripts of legislation, testimony and industry comments; and media contacts.

International Raspberry Organization Comes to Abbotsford

The WRRRC is assisting the Raspberry Industry Development Group in British Columbia in planning and hosting a gathering of raspberry growers from around the world in June, 2012. The International Raspberry Organization (IRO) was organized in 1998 and has been meeting every other year since. The IRO seeks to provide accurate production information and serves as a forum where berry growers can cooperate to increase demand for raspberries. Learn more about the IRO at <http://www.internationalraspberry.org>. Contact us about sponsoring or attending the Abbotsford conference next June.

**Washington Red Raspberry
Commission**

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

Calendar

December 1 - Small Fruit Center Conference - *Portland, OR*
December 8-9 - WSU Small Fruit Workshop, Lynden Ag Show,
WRRRC Annual Mtg. *Lynden*
January 16-18 -- North American Raspberry/Blackberry
Conference - *Ohio*
January 25 - WRRRC Board Meeting, *Lynden*
January 26-28 - Pacific Ag Show and Grower Shortcourse
Abbotsford, BC
April 4 - WRRRC Board Meeting, *Puyallup*
June 3-7 - International Raspberry Organization Conference
Abbotsford, BC

Short Notes

- Ralph Minaker and Kristie Clark were reappointed to second three year terms on the WRRRC Board representing Whatcom County. The SW Washington seat currently held by Kevin Philbrook will be open in December as no one was nominated for this position. The WRRRC Board can appoint a grower to fill this position. We ask that you provide us with your suggestions prior to our December meetings.
- Mandatory E-Verify legislation in Congress has stalled in the House of Representatives. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith's (R-Texas) E-Verify bill would mandate that employers use the E-Verify system to check their employees' legal work status. The WRRRC joins with ag organizations around the country to call attention to the negative effect this would have on the ag labor force we rely on to harvest our crop. We advocate for comprehensive immigration reform which would incorporate E-Verify into a package of reforms that would result in a legal and predictable labor force and fair treatment of workers.
- Growers are encouraged to take advantages of opportunities to learn more about issues surrounding the raspberry industry by attending the meetings on the calendar above. More details for any of these meetings are available by contacting the Commission's office. Another fine resource for keeping in touch with industry information is the Calendar page of the NW IPM site located at (www.nwipm.info/calendar.asp)
- Darryl Ehlers is heading the Food Safety committees for both the WA Red Raspberry and Blueberry Commissions. He understands that it will soon become mandatory for all growers to be certified as following food safety practices. He offers to assist anyone who is interested to see what he went through for his farm. He reports that it is not as difficult as you might think.
- Farmers and ranchers have until December 5, 2011 to vote in the USDA Farm Service Agency county committee elections. Ballots were sent to eligible voters with interests in the local administrative areas (LAAs) open for election. Farmers and ranchers may submit ballots in person to local USDA Service Centers. Ballots returned by mail must also be postmarked no later than Dec. 5.