



WASHINGTON RED RASPBERRY COMMISSION NEWS

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2007 a Very Busy Year for WRRC

2007 is shaping up to be one of the busiest years in the Red Raspberry Commission's history. We have forward looking plans in place for both our field research and marketing needs and are busy putting these plans into action. We are following the lead of other crops in developing a strategy to ensure we make the best use of the new raspberry varieties being developed. We are wrapping up involvement with the anti-dumping case against Chile and are seeking new ways to address the issue of foreign competition for domestic raspberry markets.

Darryl summarizes many of the recent actions in his column below. More details are found in the News Notes on back or, better yet, attending Commission meetings. You are also encouraged to talk to any of the Commissioners or the contracted staff.

Your opinions matter to us. Our responsibility to you the grower is to find ways to lower your cost of production and/or increase the value of the crop. In short, we exist so we can make it easier for you to be profitable. Hearing your ideas helps us do so.

Calendar

March 14 - WRRC Board Meeting, 1 pm - *WSU Vancouver*
June 11-13 - Berry Health Benefits Symposium - *Corvallis, OR*
July - Field Days @ *WSU Puyallup, Abbotsford, Sakuma, Honcoop*
September 5 - WRRC Board Meeting, 1 pm - *WSU Mt. Vernon*
October 31 - WRRC Board Meeting, 1 pm - *19th St. Fire Hall, Lynden*
December 5 - WRRC Board Meeting - *19th Street Fire Hall, Lynden*



DARRYL'S CORNER - by Darryl Ehlers, Grower and Raspberry commissioner

Hi all,

I am writing this as an opinion page with my observation as a commissioner and grower. Many things are happening that I consider exciting with WRRC. The WRRC has been going through a major change to meet the challenges head on. First and foremost we are in the process of changing our commission to look more like the Blueberry commission, by starting the process of being an entity of USDA as a Research and Promotion unit on a national basis with the help and services of Tom Krugman contracted with WRRC. The numbers are as a not exact cost, but there is a lot of all fruit coming to the US. This lowers your value by keeping the supply plate full. The Research and Promotion cycle will be a vote by of the growers. The charge will be approximately be \$.005 cents for all fruit entering the US. And to make everything legal, all growers will match that amount, which would be the same amount you are paying now. We are looking for a good bang for our buck. It will cost in the neighborhood of \$175,000.00 to turn our selves into a R&P over a period of est. two years. These funds are already in the hands of WRRC to make this happen. This will allow imports to help pay for promotion and research. The WRRC will become a grass roots satellite of National R&P and play a small part of the big picture. But it will give all growers a base for voicing their concerns on a local level. The cost to growers at the local level as an estimate will go down \$.0025 cents for WRRC instead of \$.005 cents now being paid. I am just painting a picture of our future, the rates, costs, and direction lays with our growers. You need to attend the commission meetings to voice your opinion

Our contracted executive director Henry Bierlink, a few years back was being paid \$60,000.00 annually. We as a board reduced that to \$44,000.00. as to pay for a certified accountant and to contract Tom Peerbolt Management for Web Site and major coordinator of WRRC activities. Now we have, increased Henry's salary to sub-contract those who are needed to make the R&P happen, along with his own extra services and knowledge. When the R&P is completed, it with possibly change the rate for our local office lower and increase to whom ever operates the national office. All this will be supported by imports and national assessments.

The National Berry crop Institution, which is being organized this spring. This is a program that joins five berries together, which are Raspberries, Blueberries, Cranberries, Blackberries, Strawberries together on a national scale. The purpose is grouping grants as a berry group with federal visions, research as a health vision and communication as a larger group of berry producers placing a larger foot print on the map. Henry our executive manager, will also be organizing this NBCI as part of his duties. The cost to maintain NBCI will be minimal, because it will be supported by all five fruits. There will also be representatives of Washington growers on this national board.

The IRA, (International Raspberry Association) is a group of countries that grow raspberries. An agent of WRRC met with group to decide if major raspberry growing arias have merit to create said group. This is still on going.

Washington Red Raspberry Commission

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News Notes

WRRC Board Votes to Pursue National Research and Promotion Program

A dilemma facing the WRRC 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. Growers renewed support for this program last fall by a wide margin. 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 ½ million dollars to promotion in recent years.

The WRRC has committed to submitting an application to the USDA to organize a similar program for frozen red raspberries. This is an 18 month process with abundant opportunities for grower input at public meetings, by providing written comments, etc. It ultimately goes to a grower vote to be established. We sense this step will provide you with the increased product development and marketing dollars that are needed to drive up raspberry demand.

Tom Krugman Hired as Development Coordinator

The WRRC is fortunate to find an experienced berry industry resource living in Olympia and available for service. Tom Krugman has worked for a number of ag commissions in his career the most recent being the California Strawberry Commission. Tom knows many of the key industry contacts and understands both our situation and the path we are clearing to improve grower profitability. Tom has been engaged by the WRRC to prepare the application for a Research and Promotion Program to the USDA. Our hope is to have the application in and the public hearing process underway by April.

2007 Production Research Program – Focusing on Priorities

The research projects funded by the commission this year seek to address the high priority needs identified by the growers last fall. They include 1) A project by Dr. Tom Forge (Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre, British Columbia) addressing soil health; 2) Nematic 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, New York); 4) Weed control with Dr. Tim Miller (WSU, Mt. Vernon); 5) Irrigation Management to reduce root rot and nitrate leaching (Dr. Tom Walters (WSU, Mt. Vernon); and 6) Insect and Mite Management with Dr. Lynell Tanigoshi who is also moving to WSU Mt. Vernon.

Phytophthora Root Rot Survey Still Available

If you are interested in having either pre-plant propagules or field samples tested for Phytophthora root rot, contact [Colleen Burrows](#) or Craig MacConnell at WSU Whatcom County Extension (360) 676-6736 or, in Clark or Cowlitz counties, [Tom Peerbolt](#) at 503-970-0922. Free, with on farm sampling and pick up all done for you. Results will be posted anonymously (by grower generated codes) on the WSU Whatcom County website. This is a research project funded by the Washington State Commission for Pesticide Registrations and the Washington Red Raspberry Commission to test the effectiveness of newly implemented PCR testing techniques.

Market Research a New Dimension of WRRC Activities

The WRRC Board has refocused its energy and dollars on investing in product development research, research identifying the health properties of red raspberries, and communicating our findings to consumers and food industry buyers. We are funding projects which: 1) Examine Microwave Drying Technology for Raspberries with Dr. Carter Clary (WSU, Pullman); 2) A Literature Review of Health Projects related to Raspberries with Joe Powers (WSU, Pullman); 3) Examining Suppression of Cancer in Humans through Berry Consumption with Dr. Lyndon Lacom (Clemson U). We are also organizing a Health Roundtable this Spring under the direction of Rodger Wasson who has been contracted by both the WRRC and the BC Raspberry industry.

2007 International Berry Health Benefits Symposium

Every other year, at Oregon State University, a major symposium focuses on the growing body of scientific knowledge which establishes that dietary intake of berries has a positive and profound effect on human disease prevention. Contact <http://www.oregon-berries.com> for registration information. Grower/packers and processors are well advised to participate in sponsoring this event. More information is available at either the WRRC or the ORBC.

Small Fruit Update

Growers who have not yet signed up for the WRRC sponsored *Small Fruit Update* are encouraged to do so. This email update provided by Peerbolt Crop Management provides timely crop information and a link to what is happening throughout the PNW berry industry. Contact the WRRC with your email address and we'll see you receive it.