



BOOST YOUR VISIBILITY WITH MEDIA COVERAGE

Generating media coverage is a powerful way to capture consumers' attention and get them thinking about blueberries. Working with the media is an opportunity to establish your business as the local expert, which helps you establish thought leadership with your customers, community, and stakeholders.

Reporters are more likely to cover news that is timely and local, and National Blueberry Month is a great opportunity to reach out. By providing interesting news angles and credible information, you can develop valuable media relationships and establish yourself as a reliable, expert resource for future stories as well.

Here you'll find media-savvy tips for garnering news coverage for blueberries and your business including: contacting and pitching your local media, event outreach, key talking points, and interview tips.

Tie in with National Blueberry Month

Community event: Are you planning any community events or tours during National Blueberry Month? Let the media know! Even if you are not a U-pick farm, consider opening up your farm for a day where kids and families can come to learn about how blueberries are grown. People like to be educated about the food they love. If your crop isn't at peak, you can still plan fun Blueberry Month activities for kids and showcase blueberry tips, facts, and recipes. It's all about using National Blueberry Month as an opportunity for your business to tie into a timely calendar event.

You can send a media advisory via email with the "who, what, where, when" for your event a week prior. This will provide them with ample time to schedule coverage and have the information they need. Be sure to follow up!

Host reporters: Even if you don't hold a community event, you can invite your favorite reporter to come learn more about blueberries and your farm firsthand -- a behind-the-scenes look at how blueberries are grown, how long your business has been part of the community, the state of your region's industry. National Blueberry Month provides the perfect opportunity to get your foot in the door of your local media outlets and establish key relationships that can pay off throughout the year.



CONTACTING THE MEDIA

Create a Media List

Make a list of newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations, news-related websites, event calendars and/or blogs in your community. You may want to ask a local organization or the local Chamber of Commerce if they have a list they would share.

(Note: You don't have to go after every news outlet. Pick your favorite two or three and start there.)

Once research is complete, you'll be ready to build a media list. Find email addresses, phone numbers, and social media accounts for reporters covering events, local news stories, health, lifestyle, and/or food. Be sure to include assignment editors, producers and freelance reporters to your list. If you can't find the specific contact information online, call the outlet's news desk to get the answers you need.

A well-organized spreadsheet will go a long way in keeping everything straight and make outreach easier. Be sure to check back periodically to make sure your list is up to date.

Know Who You're Pitching

Once you develop your list, get to know the media outlets and reporters. Read the papers, watch the shows, and listen to the radio stations to get a sense of the reporters' interests and themes. Start thinking about how your knowledge can help extend the reporters' subject matter further.

When you make your pitch, let the writer know how and where your idea might fit. Think through the idea through the reporter's eyes — how will this piece be of interest and need to their audience? How will it meet their criteria?

Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are great resources to help you get to know reporters, what they cover, and you may even get a glimpse into their personal life. For example, Twitter can offer clues as to where the reporter is and what they are doing that day. Also, many reporters will respond to direct messages through Twitter faster than other avenues.

Timeline for Media Event Outreach

Having a strategy will help keep you on track for a successful media event:

- One to two week(s) prior: Email your media advisory and make follow-up calls to confirm it's been received. Pitch the story to your local news outlets that would run in advance of the event such as a profile on your business or a preview of the event.



- Two to three business days before: Resend the advisory to unresponsive media to make sure that you're still on their radar. Make another round of follow-up calls and ask if they plan to cover the event so you will know to look for them.
- The day of the event: Make note of the name, outlet, e-mail, and phone number to keep track of reporters who come.
- After the event: Follow-up with media that attended to thank them for their time and offer yourself for future media needs. For media that didn't attend the event, consider sending pictures and a post-event press release.
- Be sure to share any media coverage you receive on your social media channels!

INTERVIEW TIPS

Be an Effective Spokesperson

As a business owner, you are the best spokesperson for your business and should be regarded in your community as the expert. Whether you have a lot or very little media experience, these tips will help you better communicate with the press:

- Reporters love stories with visual impact -- and blueberries are the best "eye candy." Describe what viewers or readers might see if they cover the story.
- Prepare key messages to communicate. Ideal quotes are short (10-15 words), memorable, and pithy and provide factual back-up.
- Emphasize what's new — such as new research or technology, the latest health trends, or new and different ways to use blueberries throughout the day, from breakfast, lunch, and dinner to snacks, desserts, and cocktails. Check out blueberry.org/recipes for inspiration!
- For face-to-face or on-camera interviews, dress neatly but realistically casual if you're out on the farm.
- When answering questions, don't rush. Give yourself time to think about your answer. Be brief in your response — a good rule of thumb is 10-20 seconds per answer.
- Don't go off the record. Everything you say can and may be quoted or paraphrased by a reporter.
- Be positive and talk about your specialties — quality products and providing consumers with an excellent eating experience.
- If a reporter calls you, take the time to help them. By doing so, you establish yourself as a reliable media resource.



Talking Points

When you talk to reporters, it is important to have talking points in mind. Decide on three key messages you most want to get across in an interview. Here are a few suggestions (but feel free to come up with your own!):

- July is peak season for many blueberry farms across the country, so National Blueberry Month is a great time to celebrate our favorite fruit. Summer is the blues' time to shine.
- Yes, blueberries have their own month! To celebrate blueberries and the hard-working people who bring so much to their communities and our economy, Congress has declared July as National Blueberry Month. We are proud to be a part of it.
- We are proud to have been a part of this community for ___ years. Our goal at the farm is to grow the highest quality fruit. There is nothing more important than providing consumers/our customers with a superior eating experience.
- Blueberries are a source of fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. Beautiful, tasty, AND good for you.
- Blueberries are one of the most easy, delicious, versatile, and healthy fruits. No preparation is needed, and you can take them anywhere. That's why we like to say, "grab a boost of blue!"
- Blueberries are good for the heart and the brain. We like to say they are great for the mouth and eyes too, as they are delicious and add visual appeal to any dish or straight from the container.
- The possibilities for blueberries are endless. From traditional to unique, from sweet to savory, you can use blueberries in any way. Check out blueberry.org/recipes for inspiration.