

# Impact Report

# 2022







## **Vision**

USHBC empowers the industry to make blueberries the world's favorite fruit.

## **Mission**

To grow consumer demand for blueberries by uniting industry stakeholders through research, promotions and resources that strengthen their ability to compete in the global marketplace.





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## USHBC By the Numbers

### FINANCIALS

<b>\$15,951,112</b>	<b>\$15,836,585</b>
2022 Total Revenue	2022 Total Expenses

### 2022 REVENUE SOURCES

<b>\$4,935,666</b>	<b>\$6,891,808</b>	
Domestic Crop Assessments	Foreign Crop Assessments	
<b>\$1,240,686</b>	<b>\$2,837,842</b>	<b>\$45,110</b>
Grant Revenue	Contributions	Other Revenue

## MOU Funding

The USHBC also benefited from the work of the NABC's United Blueberry Advisory Committee in 2022, and the continued commitment to the industry's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that guides cross-industry incremental funding to support fresh and processed blueberry demand-driving activities across multiple channels. The MOU raised over \$3.1 million, with over \$2.8 million going to USHBC to increase demand-driving marketing opportunities, advance nutrition affairs and improve the blueberry industry's data and analytics.



## Who We Are



It's with immense pride that I reflect on the extraordinary accomplishments our industry has achieved. Our collective dedication to data, insights, community and resources has not only transformed the blueberry industry, but has also impacted the lives of consumers around the world. The seeds of our achievements are bloomed in the passion and dedication of each and every grower, supplier and industry stakeholder who has contributed to USHBC's success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelly Hartmann".

**Shelly Hartmann**  
**USHBC CHAIR**



Gratitude and pride are two words that come to mind when I reflect on 2022 and the remarkable success the industry achieved. Together, we've embraced opportunities and delivered innovative data and insights, health research and consumer promotions to further our vision to 'empower the industry to make blueberries the world's favorite fruit!' Our achievements are a testament to the unwavering commitment and passion displayed by each and every blueberry industry stakeholder and USHBC staff. We continue to grow stronger as an organization, and we're continuing the momentum to meet our aspirational vision and mission. Go blueberries!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kasey Cronquist".

**Kasey Cronquist**  
**USHBC PRESIDENT**



# Board and Staff

## STATES

### CALIFORNIA

Member, William Steed  
Alternate, Vacant

### FLORIDA

Member, Bill Braswell  
Alternate, Brittany Lee

### GEORGIA

Member, John Bennett  
Alternate, Michael Railey

### MICHIGAN

Member, George Fritz Jr.  
Alternate, Bob Carini

### NEW JERSEY

Member, Paul Macrie III  
Alternate, Matthew Macrie

### NORTH CAROLINA

Member, Neil Moore  
Alternate, Vacant

### OREGON

Member, Doug Krahmer  
Alternate, Vacant

### WASHINGTON

Member, Bryan Sakuma  
Alternate, Brenton Roy

## REGIONS

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Member, Nathan Sakuma  
Alternate, Anne Steinkamp

### REGION 2 (MIDWEST)

Member, Shelly Hartmann  
Alternate, Katelyn Craig

### REGION 3 (NORTHEAST)

Member, Dave Arena  
Alternate, Art Galletta

### REGION 4 (SOUTH)

Member, Jody McPherson  
Alternate, Michael Thomas

## HANDLERS, IMPORTERS, EXPORTERS & PUBLIC MEMBERS

### HANDLER

Member, Risa Bakker  
Alternate, Steve Philips

### IMPORTER #1

Member, Bonnie Lundblad  
Alternate, Open

### IMPORTER #2

Member, JC Clinard Jr.  
Alternate, Guy Cotton

### IMPORTER #3

Member, Janice Honigberg  
Alternate, Ryan Lockman

### IMPORTER #4

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Alternate, Joe Barsi

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Alternate, Sebastian Carmona

### EXPORTER 2 (CANADA)

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Alternate, Jesse Brar

### PUBLIC MEMBER

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## USHBC

### STAFF

**President**, Kasey Cronquist

**Vice President of Engagement and Education**,  
Amanda Griffin

**Executive Liaison**, Andrea Walters

**Vice President of Marketing and Communications**,  
Jennifer Sparks

**Vice President of Global Business Development**,  
Alicia Adler

**Senior Director of Nutrition and Health Research**,  
Leslie Wada, Ph.D.

**Financial Controller**, Adam Winland

**Director of Global Business Development**,  
Renta Dalton

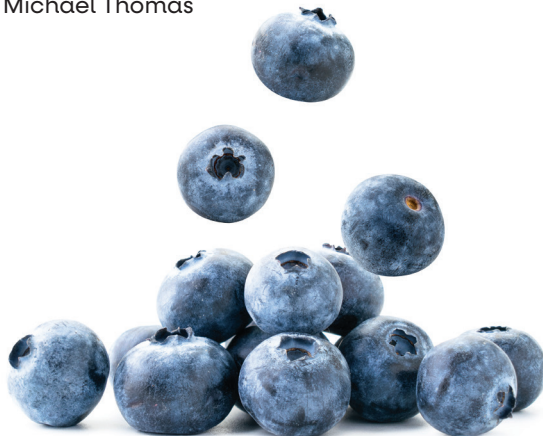
**Director of Meetings and Events**, Stacy Schlags

**Director of Business Intelligence**, Joe Vargas

**Director of Operations**, Julie Fogarty

**Industry and Community Engagement Manager**,  
Mandy Boarman

**Finance and Compliance Manager**, Ross Peterson





# USHBC Committees

## EXECUTIVE

Shelly Hartmann, **Chair**  
Bryan Sakuma, **Vice Chair**  
George Fritz Jr., **Treasurer**  
Bill Steed, **Secretary**  
Open, **Member at Large**  
Art Galletta, **Past Chair**

## BLUEBERRY INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Paul Macrie, **Chair**  
Noel Sakuma, **Vice Chair**  
Andres Armstrong  
Christy Butler  
Mark Hurst  
Mike Mainland

## EXPORT

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Bob Carini  
Elizabeth Carranza  
Ryan Gentel  
Jeff Malensky  
Ellie Norris  
Nathan Sakuma  
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Mark Hurst  
Doug Krahmer  
Neil Moore  
Brenton Roy  
Bill Steed

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Carlos Abujatum  
Cecilia Allende  
Cort Brazelton  
Christy Butler  
Bill Cline  
Denny Doyle  
Verne Gingerich  
Brittany Lee  
Matt Macrie  
Jason Smith

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Mark Sweeney, **Vice Chair**  
Amy Howell  
Mike Mainland  
Dave Trinka

## INDUSTRY RELATIONS

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Risa Bakker  
Tom Bodtke  
Jesse Brar  
Guy Cotton  
Jerod Gross  
Ryan Lockman  
Andrew Maiman  
Michael Railey  
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## PROMOTION

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Brian Bocock, **Vice Chair**  
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Andres Armstrong  
Ray Biln  
Bill Braswell  
Bob Carini  
JC Clinard  
Denny Doyle  
Janice Honigberg  
Bonnie Lundblad  
Ken Patterson  
Nathan Sakuma  
John Shelford





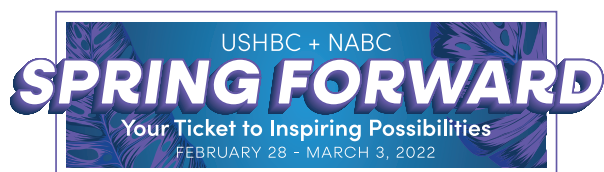
# Programs and Events

## Spring Forward 2022

**FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 3, TAMPA, FLORIDA**

The blueberry industry gathered in Tampa and online to learn, connect and cover important council and committee business during committee meetings at Spring Forward 2022.

The event included in-depth sessions on health research, foodservice innovations and crisis communications, and featured a farm tour of the nearby growing regions for in-person attendees.



### By the numbers

- ★ 293 attendees
- ★ 13 exhibitors

## The Blueberry Summit

**OCTOBER 5-8, NASHVILLE, TENNESSE**

Focused on technology and innovation, The Blueberry Summit brought the industry to Nashville for knowledge building and networking.

The 2022 event included deep dives into consumer behaviors, introductions to key data insights efforts in the works, committee meetings, reports on successful retail promotion pilot projects and a foodservice innovations tour of Nashville.



### By the numbers

- ★ 287 attendees
- ★ 20 exhibitors

**blueberries**  
INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAM

## Blueberry Leadership Program

In 2022, USHBC's Blueberry Industry Leadership Program welcomed the first class of 10 fellows. The class traveled to Seattle and Nashville where they learned about opportunities for innovation and technology, discovered expanded opportunities for blueberries in the value-added category, gained leadership skills and met with industry veterans and thought leaders to further expand their industry knowledge and experience.





# Consumer Promotions

## Grab a Boost of Blue

To remind consumers of the healthy boost they get from a handful of blueberries, USHBC's strategic positioning and call to action, "Grab a Boost of Blue," was featured in advertising, at point of sale, in social media channels and on packaging.

- ★ Total dollars in sales (fresh and frozen combined) grew +3.6%, totaling \$2.78 billion dollars vs. 2021.
- ★ Average weekly volume and dollar sales during power period weeks surpassed non-power period weeks by up to 1,112,100 lbs and \$7,674,431.

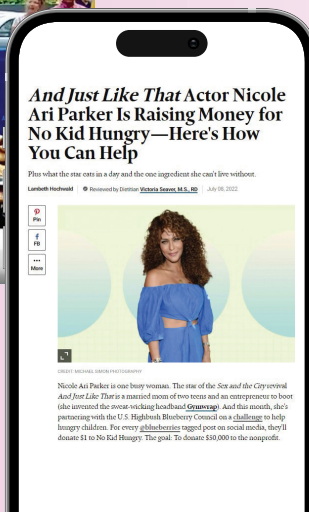
### OTHER POWER PERIOD HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED

**National Blueberry Month** kicked off in New York City with a "Boost Off" media event featuring actress and model Nicole Ari Parker, No Kid Hungry, USHBC leaders, influencers and top NYC media. Following the event, USHBC's 31-Day Challenge was featured on New York City's Times Square displays that encouraged blueberry lovers to share how they get a boost with blueberries on social media. Each post equated to \$1 donated to support kids in need. National Blueberry month efforts:

- ★ Exceeded KPIs, reaching nearly 87 million people and a voice of 247 million during July alone.
- ★ Secured 13 top-tier media placements and netted a national broadcast segment with Chef George Duran on "Fox & Friends."
- ★ Reached 85K onlookers through a New York Times Square display.
- ★ Raised \$50,000 for No Kid Hungry through the 31-Day Challenge.



A TWIST ON BLUEBERRY PIES



National Blueberry Month celebrated in Times Square



# Consumer Promotions

## Grab a Boost of Blue

**The Fall and Winter Holiday** power period was influencer supported through the Very Berry Giveaway that incentivized participants to interact on social media with a donation to No Kid Hungry. Fall and winter efforts:

- ★ Had a voice of over 3.2M through Times Square Very Berry Giveaway advertising placements.
- ★ Produced 31,529,775 impressions.
- ★ Received over 370.1K engagements on TikTok and Instagram, compared to 14,358 in the 2021 holiday program.

**National Nutrition Month** raised awareness of the versatility and health and nutrition benefits of blueberries. A SmartBrief e-blast and ads were used to target health professionals which:

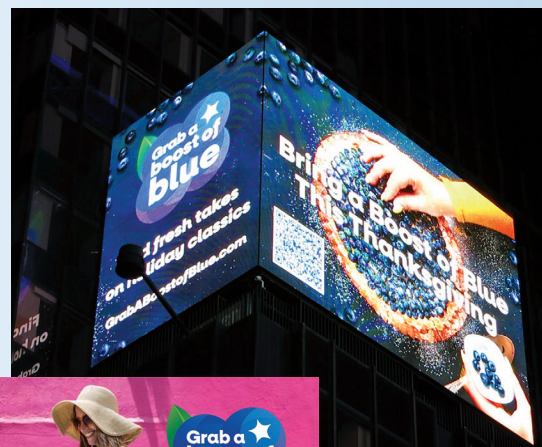
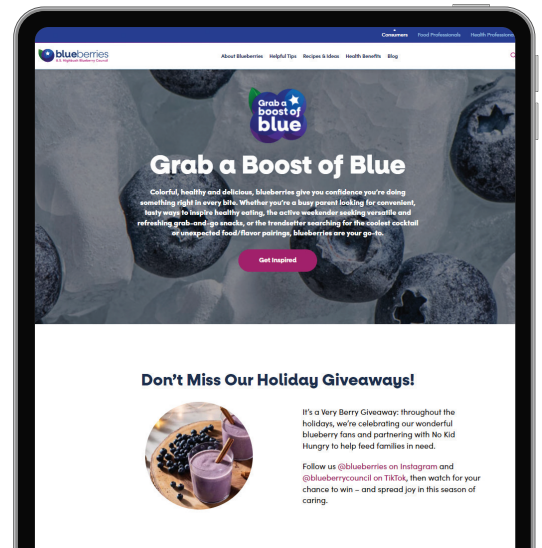
- ★ Generated 829,946 impressions.
- ★ Surpassed open rate benchmarks by 4.9% thanks to SmartBrief e-blasts.

**Brain Health Month** raised awareness for the role blueberries play in supporting cognitive health. Top-tier media placements in prominent consumer-facing outlets helped highlight new research and:

- ★ Generated 9,494,687 impressions.
- ★ Netted a MindBodyGreen article that received over 20k pageviews; and readers spent an average of 2:13 minutes over the publication's benchmark time on the article.

**National Fruits & Veggies Month** included a partnership with Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) that encouraged consumers to add blueberries to their daily routine. This campaign:

- ★ Generated 24,673,791 impressions.
- ★ Included a dedicated PBH e-blast that received the second-highest engagement rate of e-blasts, with over 900 link clicks.



### Power Periods

May Booster: Gut Wisdom		June Booster: Brain Health Month		November Booster: Diabetes Awareness Month	
FEBRUARY Healthy Heart, Happy Heart	MARCH/APRIL Boost Your Workout	JULY National Blueberry Month	AUG/SEPT Healthy Fall Boost	NOV/DEC Winter Holiday Boost	
January 28 Blueberry Pancake Day	April 28 Blueberry Pie Day	May 26 Blueberry Cheesecake Day	July 8 Blueberry Day	July 11 Blueberry Muffin Day	

Always on paid, earned, owned, social + health professional, retail

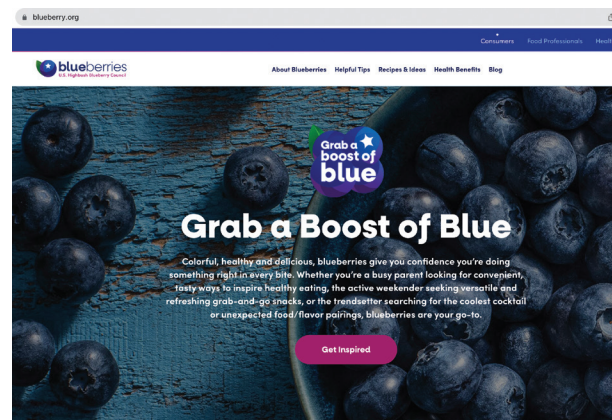


# Consumer Promotions

## Digital Advertising

Grab a Boost of Blue digital ads, especially those showing recipe content, saw high completion rates and drove inspiration and purchase intent. In addition to new recipes, blueberry health benefits and health research were significant drivers of top-tier national media coverage. Paid search, display and native audio video, social, co-branded emails, a BuzzFeed quiz and listicles were all successful key tactics.

- ★ **Voice: 55,212,827.**
- ★ **Reach: 24,681,583.**
- ★ **Engagement: 15,480,607.**
- ★ **Grab a Boost of Blue video ads generated 11 million completed views.**
- ★ **Hulu video advertisements reached over 6.5M unique users.**
- ★ **Average open rate on co-branded email was 50%, exceeding an average benchmark of 22% across publications.**
- ★ **Advertising drove over 300,000 website visits.**



Digital advertising channels have proven to be a strong driver of USHBC KPIs, surpassing all voice, reach and engagement goals for 2022 and resulting in a 52% increase over 2021.



## Earned Media

Outreach to national media, with an emphasis on top-tier consumer outlets, helped blueberries remain top of mind year-round. Earned media efforts generated a voice of over 1.63 billion impressions, with more than 6.4 million engagements. Of the 156 total number of earned placements, many were in national top-tier media placements, including *Parade*, *EatingWell*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Prevention*, *Fox* and many more. Earned media successes included:

- ★ **100% positive sentiment in placements.**
- ★ **12% of placements featured USHBC health-funded research.**
- ★ **100% of placements included strategic key messages (e.g., healthy goodness, everyday snack, simply delicious).**
- ★ **10% of placements included specific mentions of USHBC.**

## Website and Email Marketing

Website and email marketing efforts combined to drive deeper, year-round affinity for blueberries. USHBC maintained its place in email inboxes with timely sends highlighting on-trend and on-message content, while expanding its subscriber base with USHBC's list-building campaign executed via Facebook. These marketing efforts:

- ★ **Grew the consumer newsletter and its community of superfans by 308%, from 13,000 to 53,000.**
- ★ **Netted more than 1 million visitors to blueberry.org, the highest number of sessions of all time.**
- ★ **Led 76% of survey participants to agree that USHBC's newsletters keep blueberries top of mind when they're grocery shopping (2022 USHBC newsletter survey).**





# Health Professionals

In 2022, USHBC continued to deliver timely health messaging to health professional and consumer audiences around power periods by leveraging Blue Crew members, partnerships with credible organizations and ready-to-use resources made available via power period toolkits.

## THE BLUE CREW AND MEDIA REGISTERED DIETITIANS

USHBC maintained partnerships with six Blue Crew members in 2022, which included a mix of fitness experts, registered dietitians and physicians.

Blue Crew content included enticing recipes and educational highlights on social media, and media placements that garnered a voice of 140,339, reach of 121,739 and engagement of 8,248.

Media registered dietitians (RDs) secured valuable placements that highlighted key health messaging and USHBC-funded studies to drive awareness around the expansive health benefits of blueberries. Media RDs secured high-value placements in publications like *Eat This, Not That!*, *Prevention*, *VeryWell Health* and more to accumulate a voice of 29,031,740 and reach of 17,419,044.

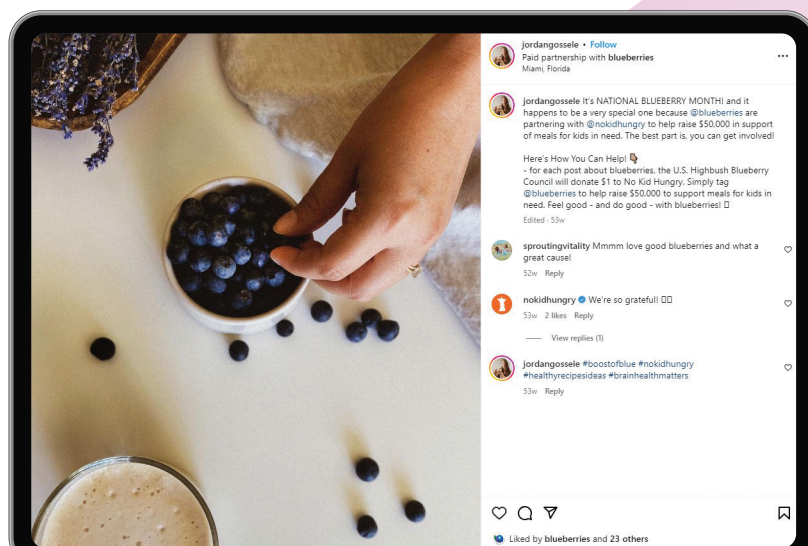


**Blue Crew member**  
**Manuel Villacorta**

## PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022, USHBC leveraged strategic partnerships with SmartBrief, the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) and *MindBodyGreen* as credible third-party platforms to amplify new blueberry research, health and nutrition messaging, and practical usage applications to health professionals and consumers. Working with these partners resulted in a voice of 9,512,489, reach of 1,105,676 and 35,002 engagements.

The PBH partnership included amplification of e-newsletter and ad features, social media posts across PBH's social platforms, an expert advice article developed by a Blue Crew member, and a digital content series made up of USHBC-owned recipes and articles. The partnership resulted in a voice of 384,419 and 2,508 engagements.



**Blue Crew member**  
**Jordan Gossele**



## Website: Health Professionals Hub

The Health Pros Hub reached 15,336 individuals with 4,966 total engagements. Plus, the site surpassed reach and engagement goals set for 2022 due in large part to the Scientific Research Library, including:

- Over 3,100 views (reach) of toolkit pages and over 1,400 downloads (engagements) of toolkit content.
- Over 60 downloads of the Q4 Letter of Intent announcement.

## Health Research

USHBC funded three new research studies to expand our knowledge of the effects of blueberry intake on brain health and healthy living.

### 1. Long-term effects of blueberry supplementation on brain health in older adults

Luc Djousse, M.D., Sc.D., M.P.H., Brigham and Women's Hospital

This study looked at whether long-term consumption of blueberries by individuals 65 years and older could alter blood markers of brain health and brain function.

### 2. Impact of midlife and late-life dietary blueberry intake on dementia risk in the Framingham Heart Study

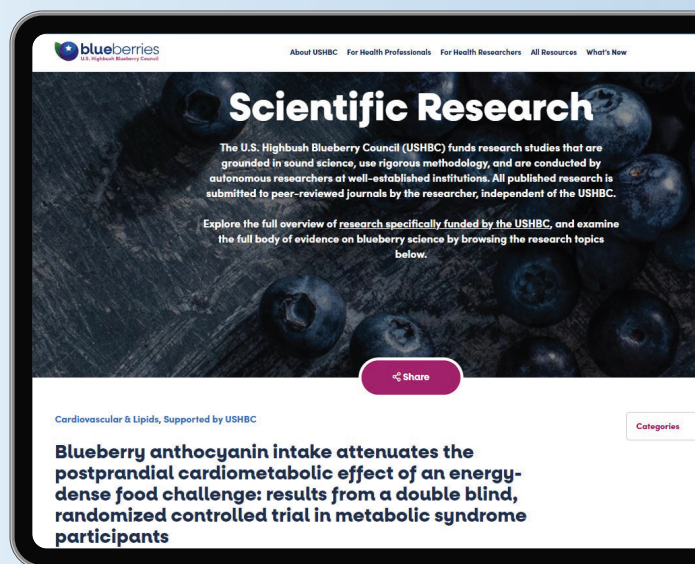
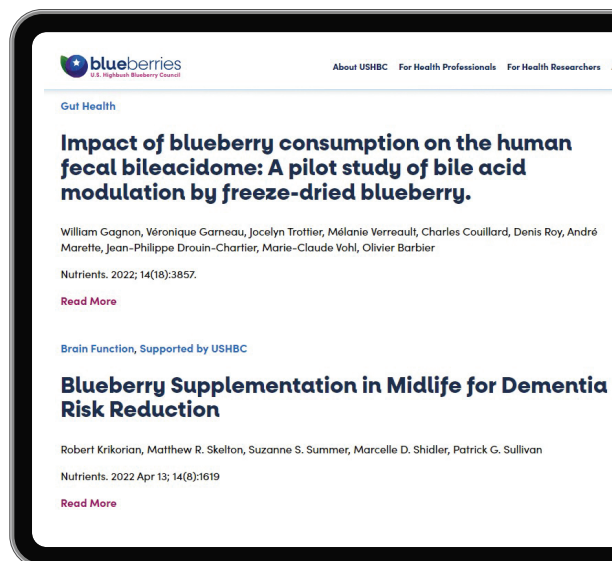
Phillip Hwang, Ph.D., M.P.H., Boston University

This research project unpacked whether data from the Framingham Heart Study, a multi-generational, community-based study that began in Framingham, Massachusetts, established an association between greater dietary blueberry intake at certain ages, such as midlife or late life, and the development of dementia.

### 3. Blueberry supplementation for osteoarthritis pain, intra-articular inflammation and postoperative recovery

Mary O'Leary, Ph.D., University of Exeter

This research considered the question: Can blueberry supplementation help prevent, slow down the progression, or improve recovery from osteoarthritis after knee joint replacement surgery?





## Retail

USHBC invested in expansive e-commerce marketing and participated in several retail partnerships to explore new ways of supporting retailers to drive blueberry demand at point of sale online and in store featuring the Grab a Boost of Blue call to action. The Retail Hub and toolkits on the USHBC website provided relevant content and compelling blueberry sales data, while the retail newsletter helped reach produce buyers, retail marketers and supermarket registered dietitians.

### PILOT PROGRAMS

USHBC launched seven pilot programs with retailers, including United Supermarkets, Harps, Albertsons/Safeway and Weis Markets, to explore new ways to drive blueberry demand, increase household penetration and prioritize the value of blueberries. All pilot program results in 2022 strongly validate the impact that Grab a Boost of Blue messaging delivers on increasing sales. A total of 967 stores participated, with the following results:

- ★ Participating stores saw **+12.5 unit sales advantage over the rest of the market year over year.**
- ★ During the Coborn's + American Pecan Council pilot program we saw **+220% in fresh unit sales vs. prior month.**

### RETAIL E-COMMERCE MARKETING

Shopper marketing platforms and point-of-purchase ads drove demand and direct sales of blueberries, while prioritizing seasonality and shopper behaviors. Key tactics included Instacart, Rosie, Grocery TV, Amazon and Kroger, netting:

- ★ More than 1.6M units moved.
- ★ \$8.75M in attributed sales.
- ★ 15.12X return on the advertising investment.
- ★ Over 1.4M units sold on Instacart alone.
- ★ Instacart ads supported \$1.8MM in sales to people new to purchasing blueberries.
- ★ Rosie ads resulted in 3.3X return on ad spend, with 2M impressions and \$183K in sales.
- ★ Secured more than 33M video plays in the checkout lane with GroceryTV.



**+12.5**

Unit sales advantage over the rest of the market year over year.

**+220%**

In fresh unit sales vs. prior month.





# Foodservice



## BEHIND THE BLUEBERRY EXPERIENCE

Behind the Blueberry Experience, the first of what has become an annual event, was held in July in Michigan and provided chefs with firsthand knowledge of the blueberry industry, processes and growers. It also educated and built relationships (and loyalty) with our VIP targets, and inspired new ideas for menu placements. Attendees included culinary leads from Logan's Roadhouse, Twin Peaks, Landry's Restaurant Group, Chartwells Higher Ed, Chobani, Jason's Deli, Bluegrass Ingredients and Creative Dining Services.

## MENU PLACEMENTS

The foodservice program also secured volume-driving menu placements with Logan's Roadhouse, Jason's Deli, Another Broken Egg, First Watch and Landry's – reaching thousands of units across the country and driving significant blueberry volume through the foodservice channel.

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ACTIVATIONS

Partnerships with the University of Michigan, North Carolina State, University of Arizona and Georgia State University reached over 200K students and created a lasting increase in blueberry use among the next generation of blueberry consumers. USHBC took a three-pronged activation approach:

1. **Back of house.** Educate and inspire university culinary teams.
2. **Front of house.** Engage students with Grab a Boost of Blue-branded giveaways, social media contests and blueberry facts.
3. **Industry engagement.** Blueberry bush plantings at working campus farms to create a lasting presence and educate the next generation of growers.





# Food Manufacturing

## THE CHOBANI HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY TEST

In a direct win from Behind the Blueberry, Chobani decided to test highbush blueberries for its yogurt line to see if a move from lowbush would be feasible. If the switch happens, it will result in an increase of 3MM pounds of volume for our industry.

## INGENUITY CUSTOM INNOVATION

USHBC supported bespoke innovation for Ingenuity, creating a new product within the Little Braniac line that includes blueberries. The final product is a Blueberry Chia Pudding that is estimated to move 2.5MM pounds by 2026.

## FORIJ CUSTOM INNOVATION

USHBC also provided custom innovation for Forij, a company that uses functional mushrooms and whole food ingredients to create delicious and nutritious granolas. We partnered with them to formulate a new flavor incorporating dried blueberries. Not only was Forij looking for a palatable fruit, they were also looking for the optimal format for a baked granola, to ensure optimal quality remained throughout the process.



Adam Croissant, Chobani, head of research and development.

**Chobani**  
**FÖRIJ**



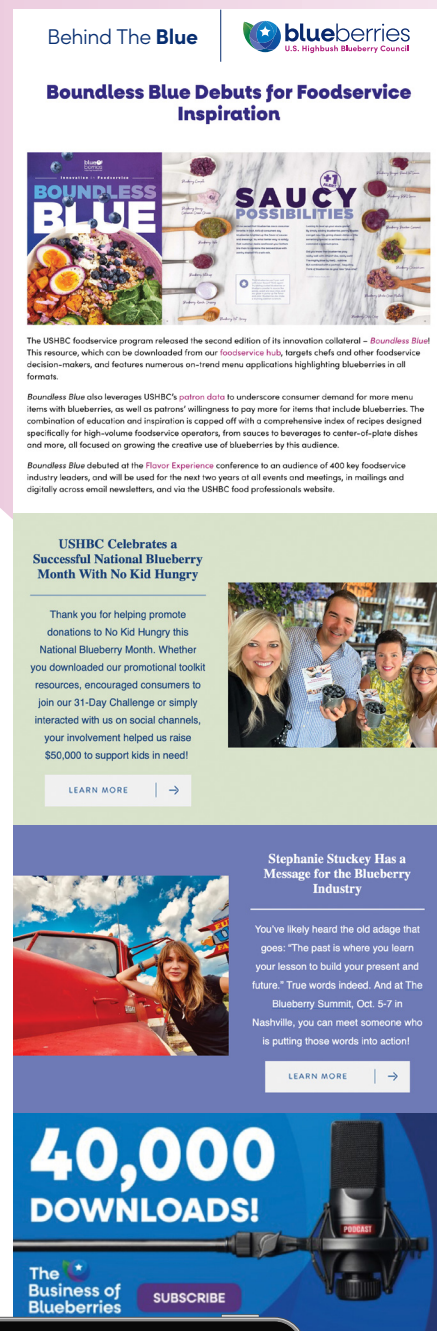
**BRAINIAC**

**INGENUITY**  
BRANDS

# Industry Relations

USHBC's Industry Relations (IR) program engaged blueberry growers and industry stakeholders, and provided valuable content across a variety of communications channels. In 2022, the industry relations program leveraged the following tactics:

- ★ USHBC delivered 52 issues of the **Behind the Blue** newsletter with a strong open rate of 35%, reflecting a 6.5% increase year over year.
- ★ **"The Business of Blueberries"** podcast reached 50K all time downloads, an increase of 6K downloads compared to the previous year.
- ★ The **USHBC website** continued to build momentum around the industry's new site that was launched in 2021, [ushbc.blueberry.org](https://ushbc.blueberry.org), as the premier online hub for free marketing resources, industry education and data and insights. The site saw a 16% year-over-year increase in engagements and toolkit and marketing material downloads.
- ★ **Media relations efforts** helped us secure consistent earned trade media coverage across initiatives, with coverage highlights in ag trades like Michigan Farmer, RFD-TV and Growing Produce.
- ★ **Grab a Boost of Blue licensees** featured the campaign's logo on packaging and in social media posts. Many stakeholders also promoted the National Blueberry Month campaign in partnership with No Kid Hungry.





# BerrySmart

In 2022, the USHBC furthered its commitment to leading the industry in data collection and analytics by hiring its first director of business intelligence, Joe Vargas, aka “Data Joe.” The new role was developed to help guide blueberry industry decision-makers in using data to make critical business decisions. It also represents the council’s increased emphasis on the use of data to track the effectiveness of efforts to increase the production, sales and value of the blueberry crop produced for U.S. consumption and export markets, and the sales and value of blueberries imported to the U.S.

## BERRYSMART FIELD

We also introduced **BerrySmart Field**, a collaborative experience among growers, researchers and tech providers to optimize blueberry farming operations, focusing on soil, soil nutrients, yield distribution, weather, chemicals and labor.

Through this initiative, USHBC began working in partnership with innov8.ag to validate a smart farm network that enables blueberry growers, packers and stakeholders in sales, tech and research to collaborate on farm operation optimization, with better and more predictable yield outcomes. In 2022, participants included Washington State University’s AgWeatherNet, Kragworks Harvest Engine, SoilOptix and GreenAtlas.

## BERRYSMART INSIGHTS

USHBC also began the development of the **BerrySmart Insights** platform, an innovative tool to help the industry analyze and track supply, historical blueberry pricing and sales in the U.S. market. This advancement of technology and innovation, available to the blueberry industry as a whole, was made possible with support from our MOU signatories.



Joe Vargas, aka "Data Joe",  
USHBC, director of Business  
Intelligence

# Global Business Development

The USHBC Export program made great strides on behalf of the industry by opening new international markets for U.S. highbush blueberries and increasing consumer demand overseas. In 2022, the council's efforts around exports and global food manufacturing led to:

- First-time participation in Asia Fruit Logistica in Bangkok, Thailand.
- A refresh of the USHBC supplier database that connects foodservice professionals, food manufacturers, processors and importers to growers and suppliers of blueberries in all formats.
- The development and launch of an international samples program.
- The launch of a new children's probiotic chewable tablet that uses whole-dried blueberry powder as a flavoring by C.K. Ingredients, a nutritional company in Malaysia.
- A new line of U.S. blueberry ice cream from Olgwa Corporation (BRICKPOP), a Korean ice cream manufacturer that specializes in developing and selling healthy, premium desserts made from 100% natural fruits.
- The launch of 50 new products featuring blueberries in India.
- A host of successful retail promotions in South Korea.







**Empowering the industry  
to make blueberries the  
world's favorite fruit!**





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