

Impact Report

2023





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.



Table of Contents

Board and Staff	3
USHBC Committees	4
Programs and Events	5
Consumer Promotions	6
Health Professionals	10
Retail	12
Foodservice	14
Food Manufacturing	17
Industry Relations	18
Data and Insights	19
Global Business Development	20

USHBC By the Numbers

FINANCIALS

\$13,855,943

2023 Total Revenue

\$14,947,215

2023 Total Expenses

2023 REVENUE SOURCES

\$4,295,965

Domestic Crop Assessments

\$5,990,700

Foreign Crop Assessments

\$1,181,826

Grant Revenue

\$2,204,632

Contributions

\$182,820

Other Revenue

MOU Funding

The USHBC also benefited from the work of the NABC's United Blueberry Advisory Committee in 2023, 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 \$2.4 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



Inspiring possibilities took on a new meaning in 2023 as the USHBC focused on new and innovative ways to keep consumers coming back for more of the fruit they love. The council's efforts kept blueberries front of mind and top of cart!

Shelly Hartmann

Shelly Hartmann
USHBC CHAIR



The USHBC displayed heightened focus, determination and resolve as it maintained its leadership in inspiring consumer marketing initiatives to boost global passion for blueberries in 2023. Even amid challenges like supply shortages and price increases, blueberries endured thanks to the council's steadfast efforts to convey the industry's message, provide timely information and sustain consumer enthusiasm.

Kasey Cronquist

Kasey Cronquist
USHBC PRESIDENT

Board and Staff

STATES

CALIFORNIA

Member, Doug LaCoix

Alternate, Bill Steed

FLORIDA

Member, Brittany Lee

Alternate, Michael Hill

GEORGIA

Member, Tammy Brannen

Alternate, Vacant

MICHIGAN

Member, Dennis Vander Kooi

Alternate, George Fritz, Jr.

NEW JERSEY

Member, Paul Macrie III

Alternate, Chelsea Consalo

NORTH CAROLINA

Member, Jimmy Horrell

Alternate, Kristen Brinkley

OREGON

Member, Doug Krahmer

Alternate, Ellie Norris

WASHINGTON

Member, Bryan Sakuma

Alternate, Leif Olsen

REGIONS

REGION 1 (WEST)

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

IMPORTERS, EXPORTERS AND PUBLIC MEMBERS

IMPORTER #1

Member, Bonnie Lundblad

Alternate, Vacant

IMPORTER #2

Member, JC Clinard

Alternate, Guy Cotton

IMPORTER #3

Member, Ryan Lockman

Alternate, Andrew Maiman

IMPORTER #4

Member, Joe Barsi

Alternate, Bo Slack

EXPORTER 1 (CHILE)

Member, Felipe Silva

Alternate, Sebastian Carmona

EXPORTER 2 (CANADA)

Member, Mark Adams

Alternate, Ray Biln

EXPORTER 3 (PERU)

Member, Daniel Bustamante

Alternate, Jose Antonio Castro

EXPORTER 4 (MEXICO)

Member, Jose Luis Bustamante

Alternate, Jose Guillermo Romo

PUBLIC MEMBER

Member, Amy Howell

Alternate, Bill Cline

USHBC STAFF

President, Kasey Cronquist

Vice President of Marketing and Communications,
Kevin Hamilton

Vice President of Engagement and Education,
Amanda Griffin

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

Director of Global Business Development,
Renta Dalton

Director of Communications, Kristy Babb

Director of Meetings and Events, Stacy Schlags

Director of Business Intelligence, Joe Vargas

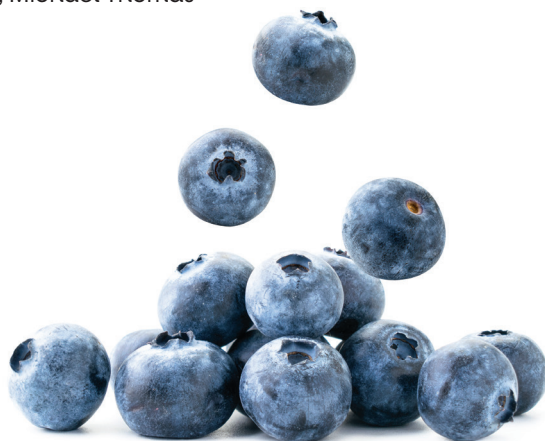
**Director of Organizational Development, People
and Culture,** Andrea Walters

Director of Operations, Julie Fogarty

Director of Finance, Ross Peterson

Industry and Community Engagement Manager,
Mandy Boarman

Communications and Digital Content Coordinator,
Gabriella Gebhardt



USHBC Committees

EXECUTIVE

Shelly Hartmann, **Chair**
Bryan Sakuma, **Vice Chair**
JC Clinard, **Treasurer**
Joe Barsi, **Secretary**
Daniel Bustamante, **Member at Large**
Art Galletta, **Past Chair**

FINANCE

JC Clinard, **Chair**
Tom Bodtke
George Fritz Jr.
Art Galletta
Bill Steed
Tracy Umbenhour

PROMOTION

Jeff Malensky, **Chair**
Brian Bocock, **Vice Chair**
Doug LaCroix
Katelyn Craig
Bob Carini
Alec Arena
Janice Honigberg
Kyla Oberman
Gonzalo de Elizalde
Nathan Sakuma
Steve Philips
Amy Nguyen
Doug Rombach
Ray Biln
Juan Flores
Felipe Silva
Daniel Bustamante
Mario Flores, Liaison, Global Business
Advisory Board
Vacant, Liaison, Health Research
Advisory Board

FOODSERVICE SUBCOMMITTEE (PROMOTION)

Brian Bocock, **Chair**
Kyla Oberman
Ray Biln
Stephanie Kleiner
Josh Scheel
Bruce Turner

RETAIL SUBCOMMITTEE (PROMOTION)

Vacant, **Chair**
Natha Sakuma, **Vice Chair**
Karen Brux
Gonzalo de Elizalde
Joseph Klock
Bonnie Lundblad

FOOD MANUFACTURING SUBCOMMITTEE (PROMOTION)

Bob Carini, **Chair**
Steve Philips, **Vice Chair**
Chad Don
Karan Kohli
John Shelford
Felipe Silva

GLOBAL BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

Mario Flores, **Chair**
Cort Brazelton
Andres Armstrong
Terry Fasel
Critian Vivanco

HEALTH RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD

Dave Brazelton, **Chair**
Mark Sweeney, **Vice Chair**
Joe Barsi
Lindsay Bodtke
Amy Howell
Michael Thomas

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Bo Slack, **Chair**
Ken Patterson
Mark Adams
Doug Krahmer
Bonnie Lundblad
Andrew Maiman
Bryan Sakuma
Felipe Silva
Darren Sinn
Denny Vander Kooi
Luis Miguell Vegas

BERRYSMART TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE

Paul Macrie, **Chair**
Noel Sakuma, **Vice Chair**
Markus Duran
Chad Hansen
Mike Mainland
Anne Steinkamp

BERRYSMART FOOD SAFETY TASK FORCE

Risa Bakker, **Chair**
John Bennett
Chelsea Consalo
Mikala Hughes
Jennifer Pulcifer
Chris Wilde

BERRYSMART SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

Christy Butler, **Chair**
Cecilia Allende
Pat Goin
Joseph Powell
Creela Hamlin
Vacant seat



Programs and Events

The Blueberry Convention

FEBRUARY 21-24, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

The blueberry industry gathered in San Diego to learn, connect and cover important council and committee business during meetings held at the 2024 Blueberry Convention. The event included in-depth sessions on macro trends in the blueberry industry, blueberry power periods, leveraging data, health research and bee pollination.

By the Numbers

★ 355 attendees ★ 29 exhibitors



The Blueberry Summit

SEPTEMBER 27-29, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Focused on technology and innovation, The Blueberry Summit brought the industry to Savannah for knowledge building and networking. The 2023 event included deep dives into unlocking unrealized profitability, blueberry breeding and genetics, blueberry health research, fresh blueberries in retail and foreign market development opportunities.

By the Numbers

★ 356 attendees ★ 26 exhibitors



Blueberry Leadership Program

In 2023, USHBC's Blueberry Industry Leadership Program graduated its first class of fellows at the Blueberry Summit in Savannah. The group spent its year of fellowship learning about opportunities for innovation and technology, discovering new pathways for blueberries in the value-added category and gaining critical leadership skills. Fellows also met with industry veterans and thought leaders to further expand their industry knowledge and experience.

In addition to graduating the first class of fellows, the program welcomed a new class. The class was introduced to the industry at the Blueberry Summit where their leadership journey began.

In 2024, class 2 will continue its journey with expanded professional development, learning opportunities and trips to The Blueberry Convention, The Blueberry Summit and a trade-related trip to Peru.

blueberries
INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM



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.

OTHER POWER PERIOD HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED

In March and April, the **Boost Your Workout** power period was dedicated to highlighting the health benefits of blueberries and how they can support in pre- and post-workout recovery. The power period included a partnership with Life Time Fitness, with USHBC as the official sponsor of their 60-Day Challenge. Leveraging USHBC-funded research, the power period shared the various ways people can use blueberries in their day-to-day routines, as the perfect workout boost to encourage usage and consumption, and to support overall health. Boost Your Workout efforts:

- ★ Surpassed KPIs, reaching +2.2 million, a voice of +11.6 million and +260K engagements in March and April.
- ★ Resulted in \$991,886.32 in attributed sales through Instacart advertising.
- ★ Drove +5,800 consumers to the "Post-Workout Meals, Snacks and Smoothie Recipes" blog post through relevant keywords.
- ★ Reached 1.3 million in paid social efforts.

National Blueberry Month featured The Great Blueberry Recipe Showdown, a recipe contest that promoted the versatility of blueberries in a range of delicious applications from breakfast to dessert. Through strategic partnerships with Milk Bar's founder and co-owner Chef Christina Tosi, social influencers, Blue Crew members and

media registered dietitians, along with an updated toolkit to provide recipe inspiration and turnkey assets, USHBC inspired consumers to grab a bigger boost of blue throughout the celebratory month. National Blueberry Month efforts:

- ★ Drove +620 recipe submissions nationwide.
- ★ Exceeded KPIs, reaching over 14 million people and a voice of +22 million in July alone.
- ★ Grew the community of superfans with a 54% opt-in rate for the USHBC newsletter (22% above benchmark).
- ★ Secured an exclusive interview with Food Network magazine with Milk Bar's Christina Tosi, along with a national broadcast segment with Chef George Duran on "Fox & Friends."



Consumer Promotions

Grab a Boost of Blue

The **Winter Holiday** power period positioned blueberries as the highlight of 2023 holiday celebrations. Through a partnership with the Hallmark Channel and its highly popular “Very Merry Giveaway,” USHBC awarded three winners a prize trip to a blueberry farm and an ultimate blueberry baking gift basket (to be implemented in 2024). An updated Winter Holiday toolkit, Blue Crew promotions, paid social campaign, influencer content, newsletter sends and more drove engagement across all audiences during this festive time of year. The Winter Holiday power period:

- ★ Drove 3 million blueberry prize entries.
- ★ Grew the community of superfans through +60,000 email opt-ins.
- ★ Garnered a voice of 5 million promotional impressions from the recipe listicle featuring 10 blueberry holiday recipes on the Hallmark Channel’s website.

The **Heart Health Month** power period raised awareness of the heart health benefits of blueberries. Heart Health Month included a partnership with the Produce for Better Health Foundation, SmartBrief, WebMD and the American Heart Association. To extend the reach and scale of this power period, top-tier media placements in prominent consumer-facing outlets were secured, helping to highlight new research. The Heart Health Month power period:

- ★ Exceeded KPIs, reaching +8.5 million people, with a voice of +16 million and over 11 million engagements.
- ★ Increased awareness of American Heart Month and new heart-healthy resources.
- ★ Provided inspiration for incorporating more blueberries in diets through heart-check certified recipes and an interactive Heart-Healthy Blueberry Recipe Quiz on blueberry.org with over 640 completions.
- ★ Netted USHBC-funded study mentions relating to heart health in top-tier outlets, including Real Simple, Eat This, Not That! and Clean Plates.

The **Healthy Fall Boost** power period aimed to reinforce the importance of eating blueberries as part of a healthy fall routine and building nutritious habits, particularly during the back-to-school timeframe. This power period included partnerships with MindBody-Green, Medscape, the Produce for Better Health Foundation, Recess Therapy, media registered dietitians and Blue Crew. The Healthy Fall Boost power period:

- ★ Exceeded KPIs, reaching over 4.7 million people and a voice of +12 million.
- ★ Provided inspiration for incorporating blueberries into a healthy fall routine.
- ★ Netted over 2 million impressions through a custom article with MindBody-Green, also amplified on social media, to highlight back-to-school recipe inspiration and new blueberry research.
- ★ Increased awareness for new blueberry research via media registered dietitian webinars with Wakefern and the Produce for Better Health Foundation.



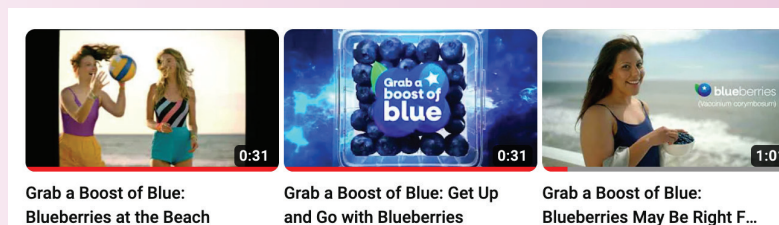
Consumer Promotions

Digital Advertising

Grab a Boost of Blue digital ads, featuring newly developed video, saw high completion rates and drove inspiration and purchase intent. Recipes, as well as content around blueberry health benefits, performed very well in 2023. A partnership with Recess Therapy garnered significant buzz on TikTok and Instagram. Paid search, display, video and social media were all successful key tactics.



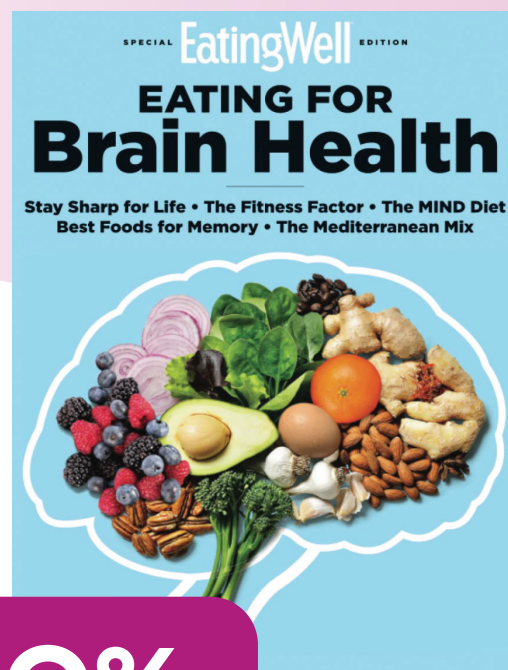
- ★ **Voice: 43,240,437.**
- ★ **Reach: 25,056,764.**
- ★ **Engagement: 8,322,890.**
- ★ **New video ads generated 6.2 million completed views.**
- ★ **Recess Therapy social content made a splash with over 100,000 post engagements.**
- ★ **Advertising drove over 200,000 website visits.**



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 billion impressions, with more than 6.4 million engagements. Of the 32 total earned placements, many were top-tier national media placements, including *Parade*, *EatingWell*, *Forbes*, *U.S. News*, "TODAY" and many more. Earned media successes included:

- ★ **100% positive sentiment in placements.**
- ★ **59% of placements featured USHBC health-funded research.**
- ★ **100% of placements included strategic key messages (e.g., healthy goodness, everyday snack, simply delicious).**
- ★ **12% of placements included specific mentions of USHBC.**



100%

Positive sentiment in media
top-tier placements.



Consumer Promotions

Social Media and Influencers

USHBC's strategic content strategy across core social channels continued driving connection with our online community of superfans by inspiring use occasions, sharing health benefits and showcasing blueberries as a part of everyday lifestyles. This was amplified through well-executed influencer partnerships that extended our overall reach and boosted brand awareness to our target audiences. Influencers also helped create new owned assets for USHBC to use across digital platforms, including our websites, and they successfully disseminated key messages that supported power periods, including Boost Your Workout, National Blueberry Month and Winter Holiday.

Total influencer metrics:

- ★ Voice: 6,917,324.
- ★ Reach: 6,736,975.
- ★ Engagement: 7,893,804.

Total social media performance across channels (including influencer):

- ★ Voice: 75,646,179.
- ★ Reach: 61,008,627.
- ★ Engagement: 10,689,358.



Website and Email Marketing

Website and email marketing efforts combined to deliver year-round engagement with USHBC's ever-growing community, from our email list of ~50,000 superfans to blueberry lovers discovering our timely, on-trend content through Google searches, targeted ad placements and more. USHBC built stronger connectivity across channels, pursuing new content that could bolster results for advertising and social media as well. These marketing efforts:

- ★ Netted nearly 1.3 million views of blueberry.org, the highest of all time.
- ★ Paved the way for USHBC's most successful optimized blog post, "6 Halloween Recipe Ideas for DIYers."
- ★ Generated +817,000 newsletter sends, a 124% increase in voice compared to 2022.
- ★ Inspired engagement among USHBC's community of superfans, securing a 2.47% click rate, a 30% jump compared to 2022.
- ★ Looking beyond the list average, the most engaging email in 2023 – "10 recipes for National Blueberry Pie Day" – resulted in a whopping 9.24% click rate, 253% above industry average.



Health Professionals

In 2023, 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

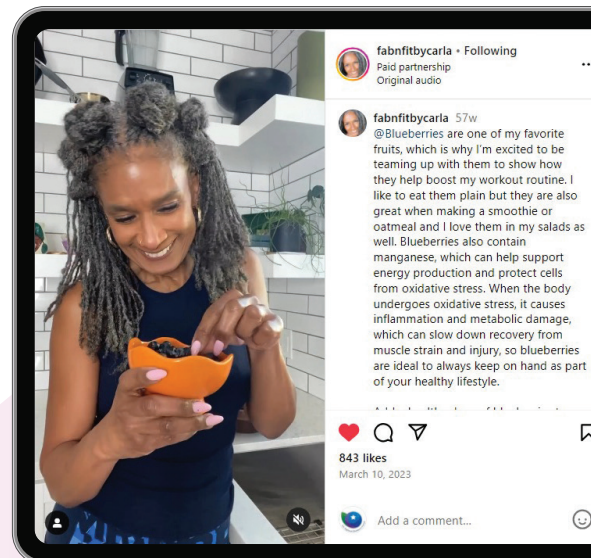
USHBC maintained partnerships with six Blue Crew members in 2023, which included a mix of wellness experts, registered dietitians and physicians.

- ★ Blue Crew content included enticing recipes, tips and educational highlights on social media, and media placements that garnered a voice of 81,945, reach of 59,877 and engagement of 6,076.
- ★ Media registered dietitians secured valuable placements that highlighted key health messaging and USHBC-funded studies to drive awareness around the expansive health benefits of blueberries. Media registered dietitians secured high-value placements in publications like *Eat This, Not That!*, *Parade*, *Forbes* and more to accumulate a voice of 256,448,712 and reach of 153,869,227.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, USHBC leveraged strategic partnerships with SmartBrief, the Produce for Better Health Foundation, WebMD, Medscape, the American Heart Association, MindBodyGreen and Wakefern as credible third-party platforms to amplify new blueberry research, health and nutrition messaging, and practical use applications to health professionals and consumers. Working with these partners resulted in a voice of 4,169,154, reach of 752,800 and 18,118 engagements. Here's a look at some specific partnerships:

- ★ SmartBrief continued to serve as a main traffic source to USHBC's health professionals site quarter over quarter, driving toolkit downloads and supporting awareness of the site, resulting in a voice of 755,826 and over 5,615 health professionals visiting the site via ad placements and e-newsletter features.
- ★ The Produce for Better Health Foundation partnership included amplification of e-newsletter and ad features, social media posts across 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 535,363, reach of 170,611 and 2,213 engagements.
- ★ In partnership with WebMD, USHBC launched a heart-healthy quiz and e-blast, highlighting the role blueberries can play in a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle, and featured new recipes, resulting in a voice of 86,314 and 1,749 engagements.
USHBC partnered with Medscape to raise awareness for new blueberry research among gastroenterologists and primary care physicians consuming nutrition content, resulting in a voice of 11,575 and 42 engagements.
- ★ We collaborated with the American Heart Association to certify five recipes as "heart check certified," and shared a dedicated e-blast to the association's consumer listserv, generating a voice of 13,647 and reach of 4,786.
- ★ In partnership with MindBodyGreen, raised awareness for the latest blueberry research and provided inspiration to incorporate more blueberries into a healthy back-to-school routine with a sponsored article and homepage takeover, display ads and Instagram stories. The partnership resulted in a voice of 2,036,690 and 4,497 engagements.
- ★ USHBC partnered with the Produce for Better Health Foundation and Wakefern on two educational webinars reaching retail RD audiences and highlighting the importance of incorporating flavonoid rich foods – like blueberries – into a healthy dietary pattern, resulting in a voice of 729,739 and 4,112 engagements.



Blue Crew member Carla Reel

Website: Health Professional Hub

The Health Pros Hub attracted nearly 16,000 views in 2023. Site content remained highly relevant to our audience and inspired lengthy site visits, below-average “bounces” from the site and +3,100 engagements, including material downloads, email sign-ups, research shares and more.

- ★ Toolkits generated the most traction, followed by USHBC's Scientific Research section.
- ★ Health professionals primarily gravitated toward the Heart Health Month toolkit, making the consumer tip sheet the most downloaded resource in 2023.
- ★ The top research page was for a study supported by USHBC, newly uploaded in 2023, and the focus of various targeted promotions.

Health Research

While the USHBC did not fund new research in 2023, ongoing studies delivered significant results.

New Research Illustrates Change in Habitual Intakes of Eating More Flavonoid-Rich Foods Like Blueberries and Mortality. This USHBC-funded study looked at the diets of over 85,000 participants in the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, examining the associations between eight-year changes in intake of flavonoid-rich foods and risk of all-cause and cause-specific mortality. The findings indicated that increased intake of specific flavonoid-rich foods and beverages, namely tea, blueberries, red wine and peppers, even in middle age, may effect mortality risk.

New Research Links Blueberries to Gut Health Benefits. The effect of blueberries on gut health was studied in a group of patients with functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGID), which affects between 10-15% of most populations and is associated with a host of uncomfortable symptoms that can negatively impact the quality of life. The root cause and underlying mechanisms of FGID remain unclear, however, the researchers evaluated whether blueberry consumption could have a beneficial effect. They found that the group that consumed blueberries had less abdominal symptoms and improved general markers of well-being, quality of life and life functioning compared to those who consumed a placebo.

New Research Illustrates That Daily Consumption of Blueberries Improves Endothelial Function in Postmenopausal Women With High Blood Pressure. Postmenopausal women have a higher risk of heart disease and an above normal blood pressure can add to that risk. Researchers found that when postmenopausal women with high blood pressure consumed the equivalent of 1 cup of fresh blueberries as freeze-dried blueberry powder, there was an improvement in endothelial function which refers to how effectively the cells lining blood vessels regulate blood flow. They also found that part of the effect of blueberries is through a reduction in oxidative stress.



Retail

USHBC drove sales of blueberries through extensive e-commerce marketing, along with strategic partnerships with several key retailers and brands, to drive blueberry demand through the Grab A Boost of Blue call to action at point of sale. USHBC's Retail Hub armed retailers with turnkey marketing resources and toolkits to help retailers promote blueberries during seasonal pushes and power period promotions throughout the year. The retail newsletter amplified these valuable resources by reaching produce buyers, retail marketers and supermarket registered dietitians, and positioned USHBC as a partner in helping them drive interest with consumers and increase basket size.

Programs

USHBC's retail efforts in 2023 were strategically aligned with power periods, including American Heart Month, which featured participation from nine retailers operating nearly 1,600 stores; and National Blueberry Month, with participation from 30 retailers who collectively operate 9,400 stores.

Retail partners in 2023 included:

ABS

DeMoulas

Food Lion

Hannaford

Harmon's

Harps

Harris Teeter

Jewel

Kroger

K-VA-T Food City

Lowes Foods

Lunds & Byerlys

Meijer

Redner's

Rouses

Schnucks

SE Grocers

SpartanNash

Sprouts

Stater Bros

United

Weis

These retail programs were multifaceted and incorporated several marketing tactics, including in-store audio advertising, Grab A Boost of Blue displays, social media posts, digital and circular insert ads, and in-store sampling. USHBC also cross-promoted blueberries with brand partners such as Chobani and the California Milk Advisory Board.



Grab a boost of blue **Chobani.**

SAVE \$2 instantly
on this delicious duo*

Enjoy blueberries
with
Chobani® Greek yogurt

*Save \$2 instantly when you purchase two (2) 16oz packages of fresh blueberries AND one (1) 32oz container of Chobani Greek yogurt in the same transaction. Offer valid from 7/16-7/29.

Retail E-Commerce Marketing

Shopper marketing platforms and point-of-purchase ads drove demand and direct sales of blueberries. After testing many tactics in 2022, Instacart proved to have the highest return on ad spend, so the majority of the retail e-commerce marketing dollars were prioritized on this platform in 2023. A test was run with a new shopper rewards partner, Fetch, that produced one of the largest returns on ad spends we've seen from this type of platform.

The 2023 retail e-commerce campaigns resulted in:

- ★ More than 703,500 units moved.
- ★ \$3.8 million in attributed sales.
- ★ 15.07X return on the advertising investment.
- ★ Over 600,000 units sold on Instacart alone.
- ★ Fetch ads resulting in 8X return on ad spend, with 1.2 million impressions and \$418,000 in sales.
- ★ Secured more than 3 million impressions at or around retail with Digital Out-of-Home.



Grab a boost of blue July is National Blueberry Month!

Blueberries
need no slicing
or peeling and
are a good
source of fiber.

SHOP NOW




Grab a boost of blue

July is National Blueberry Month!
Celebrate with the fruit that's built for packing up and snacking up all month long. Blueberries are easy, healthy and packed with nutrients that support brain and heart health.

Find recipes and inspiration for National Blueberry Month at blueberry.org/celebrate

15.07X
Return on the
advertising investment.

600,000+
Units sold on Instacart alone.




Grab a boost of blue

Food is fuel. Keep your mind sharp and your boosts blue!

Shop now

Foodservice

BEHIND THE BLUEBERRY EXPERIENCE

We repeated our Behind the Blueberry program in August, this time in Washington and British Columbia. Once again, this now annual event provided chefs with an immersion into the blueberry industry, its processes and growers. It also educated and built relationships (and loyalty) with our VIP targets, and inspired new ideas for menu placements, several of which converted to live placements within the year. Attendees included culinary leads from Sonic, Jamba, Cinnabon, Carvel, First Watch, Farmer Boys, Huddle House, Mod Pizza, Modern Market, Tillamook, True Food Kitchen and Dessert Holdings. Through the total attendance of this year's event, we were able to establish reach to over 7,000 foodservice units and \$2 billion in sales.

EVENTS & ACTIVATIONS

The team selected several key events to attend in 2023 as a means of connecting with our priority operator targets, including:

The Culinary Institute of America's **Healthy Menus Collaborative**, a year-long working group that meets in person twice annually and has monthly calls. It includes major operators who have self-selected as being interested in adding more nutrition-forward items to their menus. While there in June, we presented a case study that detailed our successful partnership with Jason's Deli. Major operators in attendance included Aramark, Sodexo, Compass Group, Pret a Manger, Chipotle, Jamba, Chick-Fil-A, Subway, Yale and others.

The Flavor Experience, August 2023 in San Diego, is the premier event for major chain operators (and where we built our initial connection with Wendy's!). This year, we presented to the group of over 400 operator attendees on blueberry beverage ideas, as well as sauces that can work across menus and day parts.

Menu Directions, October 2023 at The Ohio State University, brings together noncommercial operators, particularly college and university chefs. Our presentation resulted in several invitations to present and train at major universities nationwide, including the University of Wisconsin and Rutgers in New Jersey, both with student populations of over 50,000, feeding 10,000-15,000+ meals per day.



K-12 SCHOOL FOODSERVICE

Our program once again supported the K-12 school foodservice channel. This year, we created a specific toolkit of assets for K-12 school foodservice directors, built with everything they need to menu more blueberries, from information about different formats of berries to menu-appropriate recipes and nutrition guidelines that meet the very specific USDA compliance requirements for the sector. It also included student-facing activities and games to engage and educate students and help ensure the success of blueberry menu items at schools.

We promoted the toolkit through an e-blast with the School Nutrition Association as a key way to reach K-12 menu decision-makers, and made it available for download on the USHBC website.

HEALTH CARE

Data showed significant growth and opportunity for blueberries within the health care sector, which includes hospital systems, senior living facilities and long-term care/rehabilitation facilities. To reach this group, we hosted a virtual webinar-style “share-group” that included culinary demonstrations of blueberry menu applications with particular relevance to this audience and key data around nutrition and customer demand for blueberries. Major attendees included Dial Senior Living, Baptist Health, Johns Hopkins Health System, UC Health and ProHealth Care.



Foodservice

MENU PLACEMENTS

Our ongoing efforts to nurture the relationships we've built with key operators paid off with some significant menu placements in 2023, including:

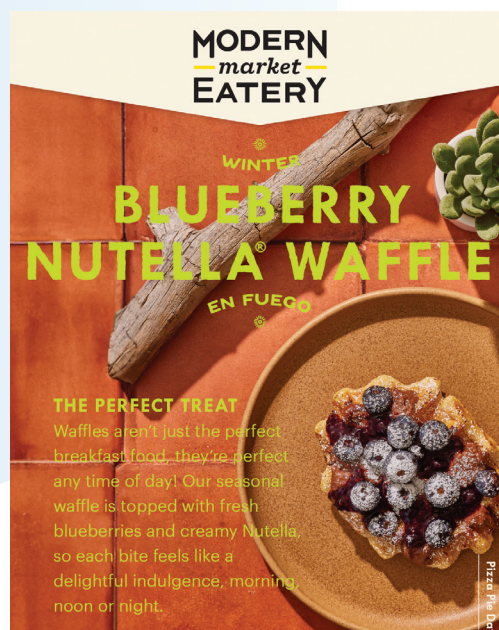
Wendy's. Blueberry Pomegranate Lemonade, launched summer 2023. This was the culmination of three years of planning and partnership, which is estimated to have driven an incremental 3.5 million pounds of blueberries through the foodservice channel in just its first three months. The Wendy's team said it was one of their most successful limited-time offers to date, and it has so far remained on their permanent menu, multiplying its impact several fold!

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse. Blueberry Black Garlic Filet, launched fall 2023. We were especially pleased to see this placement, as it used a recipe developed through our food manufacturing program and it brought blueberries to the center of the plate in a savory application and outside of summer months, all points we've worked hard to instill in our operators.

Modern Market. Urban Farmer Salad and Blueberry Nutella Waffle, launched fall/winter 2023. Building on the success of their Blueberry Caprese Sandwich, which has become a permanent menu item at all locations, Modern Market added two new items following their participation in our Behind the Blueberry experience.

Nordstrom. Two Berry Salads, Blueberry Bar, Mixed Berry Cup, launched summer 2023. We worked in partnership with Nordstrom to highlight these seasonal menu items across social media, chef contests among their regions and point-of-sale materials. These efforts resulted in record-breaking sales of blueberry menu items this year.

True Food Kitchen. Blueberry Pancakes + several fall menu specials, launched fall 2023. After attending our Behind the Blueberry experience, Chef Zachary worked quickly to add more blueberry items to their menu, both as seasonal specials (in the fall, no less!), as well as in ongoing menu placements.



Food Manufacturing

CULINARY INNOVATION

We completed our second round of new product development work in 2023. This innovation is one of the key initiatives of our food manufacturing program. Every other year, we do a deep dive into packaged foods data across all retail sectors to understand what's trending, where there's growth and, importantly, where there's opportunity to increase the penetration of blueberries.

From bakery to dairy, sauces to confections, snacking to center-of-plate, we uncover numerous areas of opportunity for blues and work with our agency partner, SRG, to develop protocepts of new products featuring blueberries in each of these key opportunity areas. The culmination of this process is a two-day, in-person innovation session where top culinary professionals from across the country present these new product concepts. Once finalized, these inspiring new product formulations were aggregated, along with compelling data, in our inspiration piece **The Future Is Blue**, and will serve as the engine behind our food manufacturing program's communications for the next 18-24 months (in lead generation communications, webinars, culinary demonstrations, newsletters to current prospects, etc.).

We do all of this in service of our goal of growing the volume of blueberries sold into the food manufacturing channel by educating and inspiring R&D professionals and product developers about what's trending in each sector, and how and why they should be incorporating blueberry ingredients.



INGENUITY CUSTOM INNOVATION

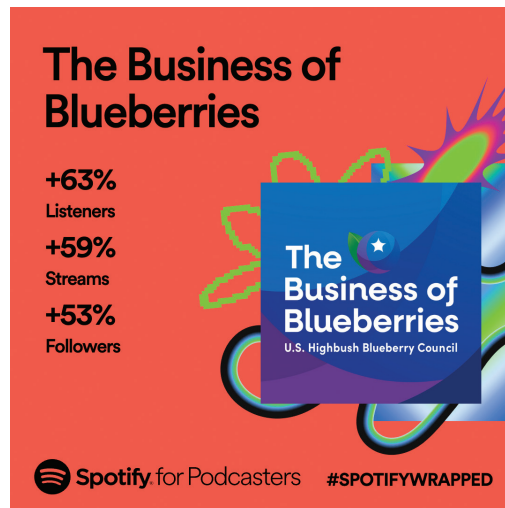
USHBC completed bespoke new product innovation for Ingenuity, creating a new SKU within the *Little Braniac* line that includes blueberries. The final product is a Blueberry Chia Pudding that is estimated to move 2.5MM pounds of blueberries by 2026.



Industry Relations

USHBC's Industry Relations program engaged blueberry growers and industry stakeholders, and provided valuable content across a variety of communications channels. In 2023, the industry relations program leveraged the following tactics:

- ★ USHBC delivered 48 issues of the **Behind The Blue** newsletter. The open rate remained strong, growing nearly two points to 36.8% compared to last year. The top performing issue highlighted national coverage of National Blueberry Month and The Great Blueberry Recipe Showdown.
- ★ **"The Business of Blueberries"** podcast reached a milestone of 75,000+ all-time downloads, with just under 26,000 downloads in 2023 alone.
- ★ The **USHBC website** reached new heights following its 2021 relaunch, with nearly 80,000 views in 2023 – a 31% increase compared to the previous year – due in large part to the Data & Insights Center, podcast and blog. In that time, USHBC's content attracted 6,500+ engagements, with downloads remaining visitors' No. 1 action on the site.
- ★ **Media relations efforts** garnered articles in key trade publications, including The Packer, Good Fruit Grower, Fruit Growers News and FreshPlaza.
- ★ **Grab a Boost of Blue** licensees featured the campaign's logo on packaging and in social media posts.



The Business of Blueberries

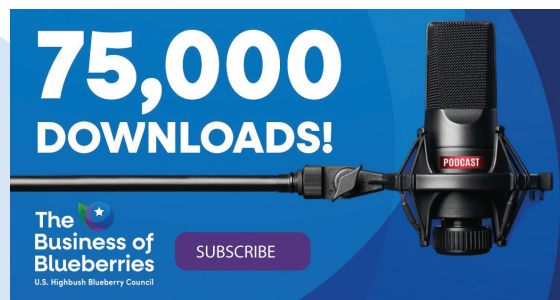
+63%
Listeners

+59%
Streams

+53%
Followers

The Business of Blueberries
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

Spotify for Podcasters #SPOTIFYWRAPPED



**75,000
DOWNLOADS!**

The Business of Blueberries
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

SUBSCRIBE



Data and Insights

In 2023, the USHBC continued its focus on providing accurate and insightful data to guide blueberry industry decision-makers in making critical business calls. The data and insights work represents the council's emphasis on the use of data to track the effectiveness of efforts to increase the production, sales and the 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 INSIGHTS

2023 marked the launch of USHBC's BerrySmart Insights platform. This innovative tool was developed to help the industry analyze and track supply, historical blueberry pricing and sales in the U.S. market. The platform is supported by blueberry industry growers and marketers who provide access to their production, sales and pricing data. This data is aggregated and anonymized in real time to provide an up-to-date benchmark of the fresh blueberry market in the U.S. Contributing growers and marketers use BerrySmart Insights to compare their performance and inform marketing and pricing efforts.

Participating companies include: Driscoll's, North Bay Produce, Wish Farms, H&A Farms, California Giant, NuBerry, Walker Bros, Family Tree Farms, Berry Fresh and Camposol.

This advancement in technology and innovation, available to the blueberry industry as a whole, was made possible with support from our MOU signatories.



BERRYSMART FIELD

The USHBC also continued its work with BerrySmart Field, a collaborative experience among growers, researchers and tech providers to optimize blueberry farming operations by focusing on soil, soil nutrients, yield distribution, weather, chemicals and labor.

Through this initiative, USHBC works 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 2023, participants included Washington State University's AgWeatherNet, Kragworks Harvest Engine, SoilOptix and Green Atlas.



Joe Vagas, aka "Data Joe,"
USHBC, Director of Business
Intelligence

Global Business Development

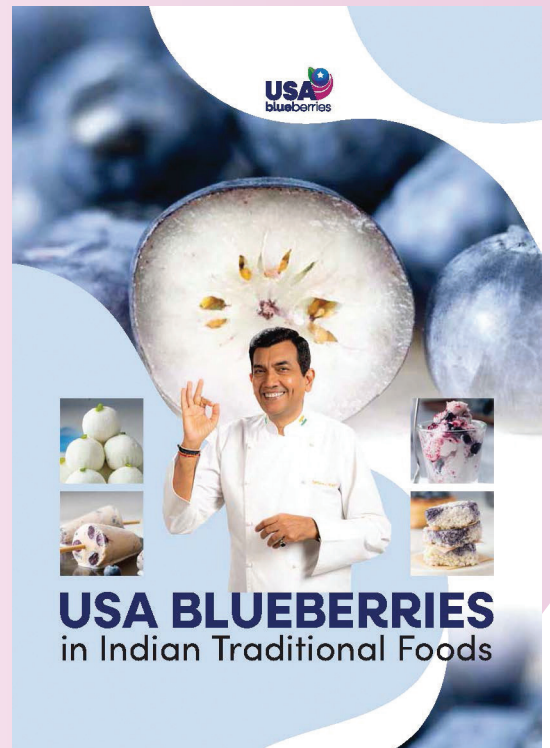
The USHBC Export program made great strides on behalf of the industry through a number of strategies focused on increasing consumer demand for blueberries overseas. In 2023, the council's efforts around exports and global food manufacturing included:

- ★ Releasing the “Global United States Blueberry Export Opportunity Assessment Report” that leverages data from Euromonitor’s Passport database, a global market assessment for blueberries, and helps identify the most promising markets for USA blueberries.
- ★ Participating in Asia Fruit Logistica, which returned to Hong Kong for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. The trade show broke attendance records, and USHBC hosted 85 trade meetings on behalf of the industry.
- ★ Hosting a reverse trade mission from the Philippines to Washington State and Oregon.
- ★ Participating in a trade mission to Japan launched by USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Alexis M. Taylor. The U.S. delegation included representatives from 11 state departments of agriculture, numerous farm organizations, and 40 agribusinesses looking to connect with future business partners in Japan.
- ★ Garnering \$150,000 in funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Quality Samples Program to purchase samples of dried blueberries, blueberry concentrate and frozen blueberries to develop new U.S. blueberry products in China and the Philippines.



Global Business Development

- ★ Promoting blueberries in Vietnam via mobile billboards.
- ★ Partnering with ABC Bakery in Vietnam to use dried blueberries from the U.S. as fillings for mooncakes and Christmas cakes.
- ★ Working to expand the blueberry market in India through strategic engagement in major expos and conferences, educational seminars and culinary workshops with celebrity chefs.
- ★ Sponsoring a “#Halloween With Blueberries Sweets Photo Contest” on Instagram to increase awareness and consumption of blueberries in Japan.
- ★ Hosting an “Inspirations With USA Blueberries” seminar for the food processing and manufacturing sector in Malaysia.



Published by



81 Blue Ravine Road, Suite 110
Folsom, California 95630

916.983.0111

ushbc.org (Industry)

blueberry.org (Consumer)

