



Impact Report 2025



A close-up photograph of several blueberries. One is in sharp focus in the foreground, showing its characteristic dimpled texture and a small stem scar. Another is slightly out of focus in the background. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a field of blueberries. Overlaid on the image is the text 'Blueberries GO BIG' in a bold, sans-serif font. 'Blueberries' is in white, while 'GO BIG' is in a light blue color. The 'O' in 'GO' contains a white star.

Blueberries GO BIG

Our Mission

USHBC invests industry funds to build demand.

Our Vision

Blueberries are the world's favorite fruit.

Our Purpose

We exist to strengthen the blueberry industry's profitable position in the marketplace.

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USHBC By the Numbers

FINANCIALS

\$17,867,571	\$15,929,958
2025 Total Revenue	2025 Total Expenses

2025 REVENUE SOURCES

\$5,588,526	\$7,293,688	
Domestic Crop Assessments	Foreign Crop Assessments	
\$1,655,837	\$3,090,499	\$239,021
Grant Revenue	Contributions	Other Revenue

The Contributions

The USHBC also benefited from the work of the NABC’s United Blueberry Advisory Committee in 2025, 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. Since 2021, the MOU raised over \$12 million, with over \$11 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



The blueberry industry created USHBC 25 years ago to grow the entire category, and our work has never been more important than it is today. The marketplace is filled with challenges – including the threat of supply outstripping demand – but it’s also filled with tremendous promise. Thanks to decades of USHBC marketing informed by health research, U.S. consumers know blueberries are good for them, and now they want and expect them year-round. The marketplace is filled with promise, and USHBC is focused on growing the pie so that individual slices have the potential to be bigger for all of us.

Bryan S. Sakuma

Bryan Sakuma
CHAIR



No other organization can do for the industry what USHBC can do. The council exists to give consumers in the U.S. more reasons to buy more blueberries, to expand demand for U.S. blueberries in global markets and to equip the industry for success. As you will see in this report, we have tremendous momentum on our side. Ultimately, USHBC makes bigger opportunities possible for you to build the business, life and legacy you want.



Kasey Cronquist
PRESIDENT

Leadership and Staff

STATES

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Member, Doug LaCoix
Alternate, Open

FLORIDA

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Alternate, Michael Hill

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Alternate, Brandon Wade

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Alternate, Open

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Alternate, Dan Register

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Member, Brandon Raso
Alternate, Alec Arena

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Alternate, Bonnie Lundblad

IMPORTER #2

Member, JC Clinard
Alternate, Guy Cotton

IMPORTER #3

Member, Ryan Lockman
Alternate, Andrew Maiman

IMPORTER #4

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Alternate, Bo Slack

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Alternate, Ruy Barbosa

EXPORTER 2 (CANADA)

Member, Mark Adams
Alternate, Ray Biln

EXPORTER 3 (PERU)

Member, Daniel Bustamante
Alternate, Jose Antonio Castro

EXPORTER 4 (MEXICO)

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Alternate, Raul Gonzales Chavez

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Member, Bill Cline
Alternate, Patricio R. Munoz

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Vice President of Engagement and Education, Amanda Griffin

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Senior Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Alyssa Houtby

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Director of Marketing, Inez Be

Interim Director of Communications, Julie Phillips Randles

Director of Meetings and Events, Stacy Plarr

Director of Business Intelligence, Joe Vargas

Director of Organizational Development, People and Culture, Andrea Walters

Director of Operations, Julie Fogarty (through 6/25)

Director of Operations, Shaun Rundle

Director of Finance, Jared Ruggles

Industry and Community Engagement Manager, Mandy Boarman

Communications and Digital Content Coordinator, Gabriella Gebhardt

Finance and Administrative Specialist, Holly Leslie

Compliance Coordinator, Crystal Wills

Administrative Assistant, Lisa Buckmaster

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Our work has never been more important than it is today.



USHBC Committees, Boards & Task Forces

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JC Clinard, **Treasurer**
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Daniel Bustamante, **Member at Large**
Shelly Hartmann, **Past Chair**

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Brandon Raso
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Michael Hill

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Doug Krahmer
Jody McPherson
Andrew Maiman
Bo Slack
Felipe Silva
Anna Jesse
Denny Vander Kooi
Luis Miguel Vegas

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Nathan Sakuma, **Vice Chair**
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Katelyn Craig
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Alec Arena
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Doug Rombach
Ray Biln
Juan Flores
Felipe Silva
Daniel Bustamante
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Mario Flores, Global Business Advisory Board Liaison

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Jody McPherson
Joseph Klock
Bonnie Lundblad

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John Shelford
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David Miller
Doug LaCroix
Ernesto Diaz
Andrew Maiman
Stephanie Kleiner
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Stella
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BERRYSMART FOOD SAFETY TASK FORCE

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Lisa Winther
Mikala Hughes
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BERRYSMART TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE

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Cheyenne Sloan
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Anne Steinkamp

BERRYSMART SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

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Christy Butler
Cecilia Allende
Brian Knight
Rajendra Gangavarapu
Emily Fritz

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USHBC council members are elected by their peers before being vetted and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. These appointed public officials have led, directed, approved and evaluated the USHBC's work from the very beginning and always will.

Investing in Our Future

Following two years of industry engagement, the USHBC Council approved a recommendation in fall 2025 to increase assessment rates to \$36/ton for fresh and \$30/ton for processed blueberries. This council-approved increase will now move through an estimated 18–24 month federal approval process, with implementation anticipated in 2028. These funds are designed to supercharge industry demand, aiming for a \$30 million marketing budget by 2029. These expanded resources will be channeled into:

- ★ **High-impact marketing:** Scaling consumer campaigns to keep blueberries at the top of the grocery list.
- ★ **Scientific research:** Continuing to validate and promote the significant health benefits of blueberries.
- ★ **Market expansion:** Opening new doors for exports and domestic growth to ensure the industry stays ahead of rising supply.



The proposal will be submitted to USDA for review. If accepted, the proposal will be prepared for public comment. Scan to view all assessment-related resources.



Economic Impact Report Shows Blueberries Add Billions to the U.S. Economy

An economic impact report commissioned by USHBC and conducted by Dennis Tootelian, Ph.D., in 2025 showed that blueberry growers and importers deliver a powerhouse crop that contributes nearly \$9.1 billion in annual economic impact to the U.S. economy, or nearly \$25 million every day. In addition to the \$9.1 billion in total economic impact, the study shows:


- ★ **The U.S. highbush blueberry industry, supported by both domestic growers and international import partners, creates and sustains 61,676 full-time equivalent jobs each year. These jobs are a result of the business activities of growers and the multiplier effect that spending generates across a variety of farming and non-farming sectors.**
- ★ **\$3.3 billion in labor income is generated annually by the business activities of growers, equating to \$9.1 million each day. These are dollars that go to wages and salaries for new employment, as well as expanded incomes to those already in the labor force for activities such as overtime pay. These dollars are then diffused throughout the U.S. economy as the funds are spent on crucial goods and services such as food, housing, transportation and health care.**
- ★ **Each year, about \$277.9 million in indirect business taxes, not including income taxes, are generated by the U.S. highbush blueberry industry from both domestic growers and import partners. These collective indirect business taxes translate to about \$761,325 per day.**




Scan to read the full report, as well as state- and country-specific reports.



Investing in Our Future




**2025
GROWERS AND
IMPORTERS COMBINED**



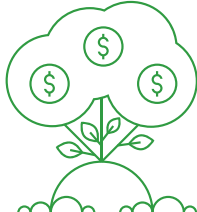
Highlights of the Economic Impact of
Growers and Importers of Blueberries
on the United States Economy

About the Study
The economic impact study was commissioned by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council and conducted in February 2025 by Dennis Todman, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor at California State University, Sacramento. The analysis is based on U.S. highbush blueberry acres in production and in development. Projections are based on annual average expenditures, which means that this impact is expected to occur each year that such spending occurs. Source statistics were secured from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The full economic impact study and analysis is available at www.usbbc.org.



IMPACT
Annual U.S. economic impact generated by growers and importers:

~\$9.1 billion
(**\$24.9 million/day**)



INDIRECT BUSINESS TAXES
Indirect business taxes generated by grower and importer spending:
(not including income taxes)

~\$277.9 million
(**\$761,325/day**)



JOBS
Full-time equivalent jobs created and sustained by grower and importer spending each year:

61,676

“As a powerful financial force, blueberry growers and importers have an annual economic impact of \$9.1 billion. Behind every farm are growers who not only tend a truly remarkable superfruit, but also stimulate business activity, create thousands of jobs and contribute mightily to the economy and their communities.”
— Kasey Cronquist | President
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

LABOR INCOME
Labor income generated by the business activities related to grower and importer spending:

~\$3.3 billion
(**\$9.1 million/day**)





These dollars go into wages and salaries for new employment, as well as expanded incomes to those already in the labor force for activities such as overtime pay. The dollars are then diffused throughout the economy as the funds are spent on crucial goods and services such as food, housing, transportation and health care.

\$3.6 billion
(**\$9.7 million/day**)

Combined spending per year for growers and importers

In the U.S., blueberries are a powerhouse crop, with growers investing over \$2.7 billion each year for acres in production and development—an impressive average of more than \$7.5 million every single day. Meanwhile, importers from Canada, Chile, Mexico, and Peru add to this economic momentum, spending a collective \$829.4 million annually or nearly \$2.3 million daily.



Strategic Planning: Three-Year Road Map for Growth

Our Plan

In December 2025, the USHBC Council approved a new three-year strategic plan to guide the organization into the future.

The 2026-2028 USHBC Strategic Plan was created with the assistance of The Directions Group and is based on 50 council leadership interviews, and 193 stakeholder surveys, along with input from USHBC staff members and partnering agencies. Following this input gathering and during an eight-month process, the new plan was developed and reviewed.

The plan reaffirmed USHBC’s organizational purpose, mission and vision statements, and established three Lines of Effort.

- ★ **Purpose**
We exist to strengthen the blueberry industry’s profitable position in the marketplace.
- ★ **Mission**
USHBC invests industry funds to build demand.
- ★ **Vision**
Blueberries are the world’s favorite fruit.



Investing in Our Future

LINES OF EFFORT

- 1. Marketing and Promotion:** We actively increase the perceived value proposition of blueberries with consumers in order to stimulate increased demand.
 - Execute U.S. and global marketing campaigns that increase awareness, preference and consumer willingness to pay for blueberries.
 - Execute insight-driven promotional campaigns for volume lifts in retail and foodservice environments.
 - Drive B2B/trade channel demand across global foodservice, manufacturing and noncommercial opportunistic spaces.
- 2. Insights and Research:** We invest in research and insights that drive industry growth.
 - Direct demand-side market research and insights to inform marketing strategy, innovation and segmentation.
 - Direct research and insights on the benefits of blueberries.
 - Direct supply-side research and insights initiatives to improve grower productivity and business outcomes.
- 3. Industry Services:** We engage stakeholders with the data, insights and leadership opportunities that cultivate a unified, future-ready blueberry industry.
 - Provide high-quality data and collaborate with stakeholders to evolve with their information requirements.
 - Amplify impact and foster stakeholder collaboration, engagement and connection to the organization and the industry.

The plan and its tenets are a road map for USHBC's organizational priorities through 2028.

And, with the support of industry leaders and communications consultants Armato Barber, USHBC developed a messaging framework that clearly defines who we serve, our unique purpose and why our mission is more critical today than ever before.



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We exist to give more consumers in the U.S. more reasons to buy more blueberries, to expand demand for U.S. blueberries in global markets and to equip the industry for success.

Programs and Events



The Blueberry Convention

OCTOBER 8-10, 2025
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

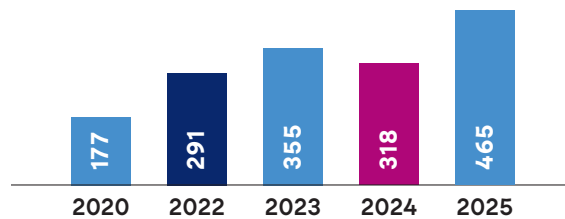


The blueberry industry gathered at The 2025 Blueberry Convention in Seattle to explore cutting-edge technologies and groundbreaking advancements in the blueberry industry. Attendees heard from inspirational keynotes and learned side-by-side during educational sessions. Our first-ever Blueberry Boost Accelerator pitch competition introduced attendees to innovative products that incorporate blueberries in bold ways during a “Shark Tank” style competition, and we honored industry luminaries during our awards dinner and reception. Many attendees also visited Washington state’s most innovative blueberry operations during The Blueberry Farm Tour.

By the Numbers

★ 456 attendees ★ 44 exhibitors

Attendees 2020-2025



Programs and Events

Blueberry Leadership Program

In 2025, USHBC's Blueberry Industry Leadership Program graduated its third class of fellows at The Blueberry Convention in Seattle. 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.

The class also completed its Capstone Project, a Blueberry education kit for kids 12 and under. The kit provides engaging, age-appropriate materials that encourages an appreciation for agriculture and healthy eating among young learners.

Applications for class four opened in winter 2025.

CLASS 3 GRADUATES

- Yvan Berrospi, Family Tree Farms
- Gabriel Boccock, Bumbleberry Acres
- Joshua Carlton, JLC Farms
- Sergio Carrasco, The Fruitist Company
- Jake Johnson, Fall Creek Farm & Nursery
- Stephanie Kleiner, Driscoll's
- Peter Machala, Wakefern Food Corp.
- Zach Semerikov, Scenic Fruit
- Brody Schropp, MBG Marketing
- Jessica Silver, United Exports Sales and Marketing

“
Ultimately, USHBC
makes bigger opportunities
possible for people to build
the business, life and
legacy they want.”



Consumer Promotions

Blueberries GO BIG

In July 2025, we launched a major new consumer marketing campaign, “Blueberries GO BIG,” focused on elevating the blueberry by celebrating how this small, simple fruit delivers “huge benefits.” This launch, which capped off National Blueberry Month, was designed to create a stronger emotional connection with consumers. While maintaining health as a foundational message, the campaign also gives more focus to key attributes like the great taste and easy-to-eat benefits of blueberries, highlighting the fruit’s role in better-for-you snacking. This initiative is the next phase in the continuous evolution of our brand, developed in partnership with our agency, Schafer Condon Carter (SCC).

The “Blueberries GO BIG” campaign debuted with two new captivating ads, “A Better Way” and “Next Level Snacks,” which showcase the fruit’s ability to “go big” in different scenarios like post-workout recovery and halftime snacking. The comprehensive debut was supported by a targeted paid media campaign aimed at 18 million blueberry consumers, using a wide range of channels, including programmatic display, online video (OLV), audio, connected TV (CTV), paid social and paid search. It also featured a massive TikTok TopView campaign and ongoing partnerships with influencers. Our goal with all these efforts is to increase demand across all channels and empower the industry to make blueberries the world’s favorite fruit.



Paid Media

In 2025, we invested \$1.83 million across seven media partners to balance scale, efficiency and premium placements. We intentionally balanced high-efficiency scale channels with premium publisher placements, recognizing that not all impressions are created equal. Higher cost per metric (CPM) placements supported brand equity and quality engagement, while lower CPM channels drove broad reach and cost-efficient performance.

TACTICS

- ★ **Programmatic:** Display, Native, OLV, CTV/OTT, Audio
- ★ **Paid Social:** Meta (IG and Facebook), TikTok, Pinterest
- ★ **Paid Search:** Google Ads

Paid Media Metrics:

- ★ 227,441,646 total impressions
- ★ 1,631,216 clicks
- ★ 22,993,468 video views
- ★ \$8.05 blended CPM

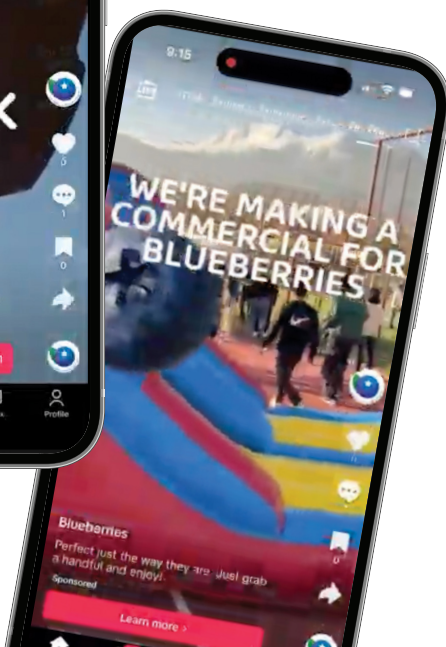
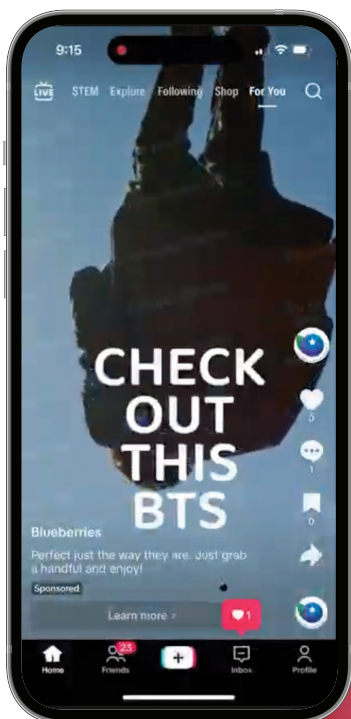


Consumer Promotions



SPOTLIGHT

TikTok Takeover: A TikTok TopView campaign on July 29, featuring a thumb-stopping behind-the-scenes look at one of our new ad campaign's biggest stunts, garnered 35 million media impressions, 1.3 million clicks and 16K likes – performing 18% above our engagement benchmark.



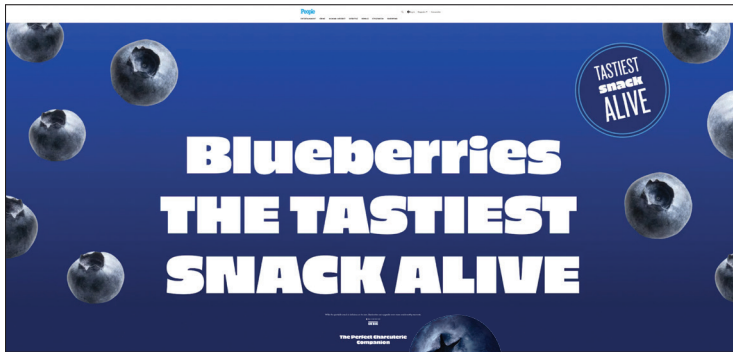
“ Thanks to decades of USHBC marketing informed by health research, U.S. consumers know blueberries are good for them. And for the first time in modern history, they want – and expect – them year-round. ”



Consumer Promotions

SPOTLIGHT

Tastiest Snack Alive with People Magazine: People's iconic and highly anticipated Sexiest Man Alive issue debuted alongside blueberries – as the Tastiest Snack Alive. The magazine included a full-page print ad, an expansive digital advertorial and a series of paid social ads with more tempting ways to inspire readers to enjoy their favorite fruit. By aligning with a well-known and loved franchise, blueberries were positioned in a new and exciting way that emphasized their great taste, crave-worthiness and snackability. The successful campaign garnered 18 million impressions among a total audience reach of 12 million, 45K engagements and 51K clicks.



Blueberries GO BIG



Consumer Promotions

Social Media and Influencers

USHBC's strategic content strategy across core social media channels continued driving connection with an online community of blueberry fans by inspiring usage occasions, sharing health benefits and showcasing blueberries as a part of everyday moments and active lifestyles. Influencer partnerships amplified this effort, extending our overall reach and boosting brand awareness among target audiences. These collaborations also generated new, engaging content for USHBC to leverage and reshare, especially for snacking occasions, while delivering key messages about blueberries in a creative and authentic way. Our content strategy also evolved to feature more culturally relevant short-form videos to engage younger millennial and Gen Z audiences, especially on TikTok.

Social Media Metrics:

- ★ 54 million impressions
- ★ 306.7K engagements
- ★ 8.8K net new followers



@fitfoodiele

@fitfoodiele



Consumer Promotions

@whitneymarierisner



Not only are @blueberries a yummy game day snack, they also are a good source of fiber and Vitamin C #BlueberryPartner #BlueberriesGOBIG

@thesunalsoreads



@reno.james8



“

Health benefits
are where
opportunities
begin, not end.



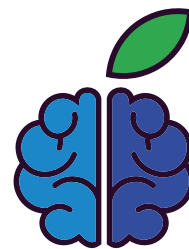
Aligning Research With Consumer Awareness

As a foundational step in aligning the council's health research program with consumer awareness today, the council engaged consulting company KekstCNC to develop strategy and focus for all future research investment.

“I enjoyed working with KekstCNC to help ensure our efforts match the priorities of our health research and nutrition program, and to get a better understanding about how consumers are thinking about blueberries and health today,” shared Health Research Advisory Board Chair Tammy Brannen. “I’m excited about the strategy we have, and the data-driven approach we’re taking.”

KekstCNC recommended focusing on cognitive benefits due to their potential to increase blueberry purchase and consumption. Following this recommendation, the USHBC convened a group of experts in cognitive and consumer science to develop a plan for a future call for research on blueberries' impact on cognitive health.

2025 Research Paper Highlights



Seven papers on USHBC-supported work were published in 2025, two of which were initial study design reports. Key findings from the other five papers include:

- ★ **Healthy Aging:** Research by Aedin Cassidy, Ph.D., and Eric B. Rimm, Ph.D., and their colleagues, using data from the Harvard Nurses' Health Study, suggested that a high intake of flavonoid-rich foods, including blueberries, may support healthy aging.
- ★ **Gut Microbiome:** A study by W.E. Kraus, MD, and colleagues demonstrated that blueberry consumption shifted the gut microbiome of overweight or obese older adults, promoting bacteria that metabolize blueberry polyphenols.
- ★ **Infant Health:** Two papers from an infant study by Minghua Tang, Ph.D., found that introducing blueberries in the form of freeze-dried blueberry powder to breast-fed infants (5-12 months) led to a more diverse and beneficial gut bacteria profile. Additionally, these infants had improved allergy symptoms and fewer new allergy symptoms compared with those who did not receive blueberries.

Prior to the release of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), the USHBC had consistently recommended to the DGA Committee that fruit recommendations should incorporate subgroups, such as a berry group, to encourage the consumption of a wider array of nutrients. Supporting this position, a menu-modeling study was published by Kim Stote, Ph.D., and USHBC Senior Director of Nutrition and Health Research Leslie Wada, Ph.D.



Health Research and Nutrition

The study demonstrated that the nutritional value of three USDA diet patterns (Healthy-U.S., Healthy Mediterranean-Style and Healthy Vegetarian) was improved when berries were included as one of the two recommended daily fruit servings. Specifically, replacing one of the two servings of commonly consumed fruit (apples, grapes or bananas) per day with berries led to a 93.8% increase in anthocyanins, with minimal changes in calories and macronutrient composition. Additionally, depending on the dietary pattern, this swap increased dietary fiber by up to 5.1%, soluble fiber by up to 10.2% and vitamin C by up to 16%.



USHBC's shopper marketing program continues to drive strong retail performance, increasing demand at point of sale. Through integrated in-store and digital tactics, the program captures shopper attention, expands market share and supports retailers during key selling periods.

2025 Promotional Calendar and Performance

★ Q1: Health Forward

Through an integrated off-site and on-site strategy, we promoted frozen blueberries to capitalize on New Year health trends and drive cross-category basket growth. Promotions supported an overall positive impact across participating retailers, resulting in a combined unit sales increase of close to 300,000 units, and strong returns, with multiple retailers achieving ROIs exceeding 600%. While the total frozen blueberry category was down during the campaign period, several key retail banners still saw modest increases.

★ Q2: Spring/Summer Kick-Off

Impactful in-store programming through partnerships with national and super-regional retailers aligned with seasonal events like Memorial Day and Mother's Day to establish a strong selling proposition. The program resulted in positive sales at most key retailers, with digital campaigns amplifying in-store presence and outperforming benchmarks. However, price fluctuations and promotional activity heavily influenced unit sales.



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The marketplace is filled with promise. There's tremendous room for growth.



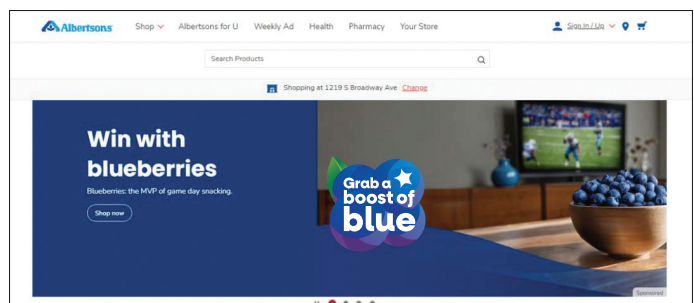
Retail

★ Q3: National Blueberry Month

Our strategy for this important selling period aggressively leveraged National Blueberry Month with health-forward messaging and in-store events when consumer interest in blueberries was particularly high. This strategy led to strong national growth, with multiple retailers achieving double-digit dollar sales gains (+41.8% sales at one retailer, and +36.9% sales at another), and high campaign efficiency, driving strong reach and conversion across key partners. However, due to regional pricing pressures and retail deflation, some banners saw unit declines despite dollar growth.

★ Q4: Fresh Twists on Fall

We leaned into football snacking occasions and cut through holiday noise by positioning blueberries as a fresh, feel-good game-day snack. While performance was varied, the campaign ultimately delivered solid momentum across several key retailers, with meaningful year-over-year gains in dollars and units where promotional investment and marketing support were concentrated.



Retail Partnerships

Campaigns reached both national and regional retailers, strategically targeting partners with significant footprints and potential to move volume.

NATIONAL

- ★ AHOLD
(Corporate and select banners)
- ★ Albertson's Safeway
(Corporate and select divisions)
- ★ Costco
- ★ Kroger
(Corporate and select banners)
- ★ IGA USA
- ★ Sam's Club
- ★ Sprouts
- ★ Target
- ★ Walmart
- ★ Whole Foods

SUPER REGIONAL

- ★ Demoulas/Market Basket
- ★ Gelson's
- ★ Giant Eagle
- ★ Fiesta/El Super
- ★ H-E-B
- ★ HyVee
- ★ Meijer
- ★ Raley's
- ★ Schnucks
- ★ Smart & Final
- ★ SpartanNash
- ★ Tops/Price Chopper
- ★ Wakefern/ShopRite



Happy Heart Month!

Show yourself some love with nutritious foods to support a healthy heart—like sweet, affordable frozen blueberries. But first, let's take a look back at January.



Easy Recipes for a Healthy Heart

Jump start your mornings with a heart-healthy boost by incorporating frozen, budget-friendly blueberries. Combine them with oatmeal for extra fiber, or blend them into a delicious smoothie! Try our favorite recipes below.



PB&J Oatmeal
[VIEW RECIPE](#)



Blueberry Walnut Baked Oatmeal
[VIEW RECIPE](#)



Peanut Butter & Blueberry Smoothie
[VIEW RECIPE](#)



Blueberry Banana Acai Bowl
[VIEW RECIPE](#)

February Dietitian Pick Meal Deal

Sneak peak! Starting February 12, you can get the ingredients to create this Chicken Stuffed Bell Pepper recipe to feed four for under \$20.



Healthier Habits members earn 2X Points on select recipe ingredients!
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MORE DIETITIAN PICK SAVINGS

Not sure where to start? Visit the Healthier Habits space in the Schnucks Rewards app and find dietitian-approved recipes, digital offers on Dietitian Pick items and more!

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Schnuck Markets, Inc. Headquarters, 11420 Lackland Road, Saint Louis, Missouri 63146



Blueberry Boost Accelerator

In partnership with innovation advisory firm VentureFuel, USHBC launched the inaugural Blueberry Boost Accelerator to fuel forward-thinking product innovation and elevate blueberries as a hero ingredient. The nine-week hybrid program was designed to discover and support emerging startups that are redefining the future of blueberries by connecting early-stage, revenue-generating companies with top industry leaders. Through expert mentorship, tailored commercialization support and strategic guidance, the program aimed to fast-track the growth of products using blueberries as a prominent ingredient.

A selection panel of blueberry industry leaders chose four companies for the inaugural cohort, selected for their bold use of blueberries in innovative products that spanned wellness, fun snacking formats and better-for-you indulgence:

- ★ **Bonny Prebiotic Fiber Powder (New York, NY):** A clean-label, prebiotic fiber powder with a blueberry-infused flavor, designed to support gut health and make fiber fun, flavorful and functional.
- ★ **Farmer Bob's "Beyond Berries"™ (Salem, OR):** A playful, frozen, nutrient-dense fruit snack made with upcycled blueberries and raspberries, and naturally sweet dates, reshaped into a new-to-market format that's fun, naturally sweet and family-friendly.
- ★ **Pluff (Orlando, FL):** A high-protein, mousse-style dessert launching a "Berry Blast" flavor made with freeze-dried blueberries. Pluff delivers indulgent texture and functional nutrition in one high-protein, low-sugar bite.
- ★ **Sorbatta's "Blue Cream" (Wapato, WA):** A dairy-free, allergy-friendly frozen dessert made from 75% highbush blueberries, offering a creamy, fruit-first alternative to traditional ice cream.

The program culminated in a live pitch competition at The 2025 Blueberry Convention in Seattle. After being evaluated by a panel of industry experts, Pluff was crowned the \$20,000 grand-prize winner, and Bonny was named the \$10,000 runner-up. The success of the inaugural cohort underscores our commitment to leadership in the food system through innovation, demonstrating how creativity becomes commerce when startups and industry leaders collaborate, and positioning blueberries as a true launchpad for new ideas and products.

Results Metrics:

- ★ 34 earned-media placements, a majority of which were feature style pieces about the program.
- ★ 7.8 million earned-media impressions.
- ★ 97% message pull-through connecting blueberries with product innovation.
- ★ 30 total applications received, with 93% of applicants assessed at a high or medium fit for the program.



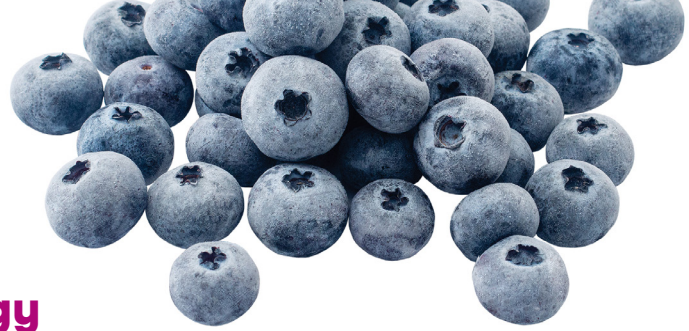


WINNER!



RUNNER UP





Foodservice Foundational Strategy

This channel has undergone significant strategic changes, most notably ensuring we're refocused on securing sales-driven partnerships to move as much volume of blueberries as possible, prioritizing processed (frozen) blueberries. In 2025, we worked on rebuilding our foundational strategy, which included:

- ★ An extensive audit of prior channel structures and processes to evaluate past efforts and identify opportunities for optimization.
- ★ In-depth operator research to uncover critical insights, overcome usage barriers and develop actionable strategies to increase blueberry consumption.
- ★ Analysis of successful commodity organizations' structures within foodservice and food manufacturing to inform our strategic direction.
- ★ The development of a new "inside-out" operating model, shifting primary focus to internal team execution of lead generation and sales, moving away from outside agency reliance.

This work ensures that we are well-positioned for future success, especially with the expanded investment provided by the upcoming assessment increase.

OPERATOR INSIGHTS

In our operator research, we identified the following challenges and opportunities for blueberries in foodservice:

Challenge	Opportunity
Blueberries are often typecast in breakfast basics that are familiar but uninspired, with other fruits being more top-of-mind for other dayparts, especially strawberries.	There is an opportunity to “break out of the berry box” and showcase blueberries in culinary applications beyond the standbys, especially beverages and sauces for both dessert and savory applications.
Operators can see berries as challenging across the board, especially when it comes to shelf life.	Operators need education on how blueberries – in their right formats – could help their bottom line. Fresh blueberries typically have longer shelf life and are much easier to prepare compared to other fresh berry types, while frozen blueberries offer many extended shelf life benefits.
Misconceptions about blueberry formats often lead operators to choose the wrong option for their specific application.	Education is also needed on the quality and properties of frozen blueberries, and how they can be used in ways that enhance menus, while weaving seamlessly into operations.

The fundamental takeaway is clear: Blueberries, particularly due to volume increases in processed/frozen formats, hold significant untapped potential in the foodservice channel. Our restructuring efforts are directly working toward realizing this potential in tandem with forecasted increase in production.

Global Business Development

The USHBC global business development program made significant strides on behalf of the industry through a range of strategies aimed at increasing consumer demand for blueberries overseas. In 2025, the council's efforts in international markets netted the following notable impacts:

MARKET SEGMENTATION

USHBC continued strategic market segmentations based on insights from the “Global Business Opportunity Assessment Report” by Euromonitor International and feedback from industry stakeholders, including the USHBC's Global Business Development Advisory Board.

- ★ **Established Markets:** Canada, Mexico, South Korea and Japan.
- ★ **Emerging Growth Markets:** Vietnam, the Philippines.
- ★ **Exploratory Markets:** India, Malaysia.
- ★ **Watch Market:** China.



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

USHBC competed for and leveraged USDA grants for its work, including the Market Access Program (MAP), and Regional Agricultural Promotion Programs (RAPP). The global business development program saw a major expansion in funding use in 2025:

- ★ **Total grant funding used:** More than \$1.6 million, representing a 137% increase from \$700k in 2024.



MARKETING EFFORTS

Grants and contributions were strategically allocated across several key areas: retail activations, public relations/consumer marketing, B2B trade outreach and product innovation.



Global Business Development

Retail Promotions and Shopper Marketing

The largest budget allocation (38%) focused on converting consumer interest into measurable sales growth through high-visibility activations with retail and industry partners. Key achievements across target markets in 2025 include:

- ★ **Omnichannel presence:** Executed a mix of in-store sampling, demos, high-impact displays and point-of-sale materials (POSM), complemented by digital e-commerce promotions and retail partner social media campaigns.
- ★ **Influencer integration:** Leveraged strategic influencer engagement before and during promotions to amplify event visibility.
- ★ **Scale and reach:** Conducted 4,517 promo days across 840 stores.
- ★ **Sales impact:** Promoted all blueberry formats and incentivized the creation of new SKUs, resulting in tangible sales growth across all regions.



PR and Consumer Marketing

Representing 26% of the total budget, these demand-driving initiatives helped strengthen consumer awareness and top-of-mind preference for USA Blueberries through experiential, digital and social strategies.

- ★ **Hosted 16 experiential events, including media conferences master classes, live culinary demos and cooking contests.**
- ★ **Executed a comprehensive multichannel strategy spanning print, broadcast, digital, social media, podcasts and livestreams.**
- ★ **Generated over 149 million impressions and 709,000 engagements, and secured 47,411 new followers, by managing a cadence of press releases, advertorials and high-value influencer partnerships.**

B2B Trade Outreach and Product Innovation

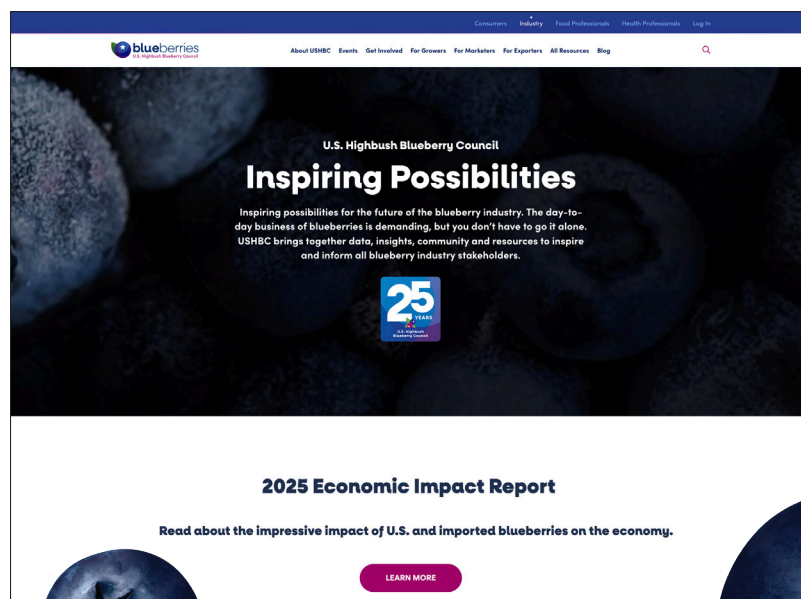
Allocating 36% of the total budget, USHBC partnered strategically with industry stakeholders, including importers, foodservice operators and manufacturers, to drive exports, technical innovation and the expanded use of USA Blueberries.

- ★ **Executed 14 technical seminars and 13 one-on-one consultations to inspire new applications.**
- ★ **Attended 15 global trade shows across eight markets to build connections with importers and industry professionals.**
- ★ **Facilitated the creation of 70+ new items and products globally, diversifying the commercial use of USA Blueberries.**
- ★ **Reached 1,482 industry professionals and generated 489 trade leads for additional follow-up.**

USHBC's Industry Relations program engaged blueberry growers and industry stakeholders, and provided valuable content across a variety of communications channels. In 2025, the industry relations program leveraged the following tactics:

- ★ Delivered 12 issues of the *Behind The Blue* newsletter. The open rate remained strong, growing 10 points to 45.7% compared to 2024. The top performing issues highlighted coverage of retail promotions and The Blueberry Convention.
- ★ Led media relations efforts that garnered articles in key trade publications, including *Fresh Plaza*, *The Packer*, *Fruit Growers News*, *The Produce News*, *Fruitnet* and *Grocery Insight*.
- ★ Led a series of regional engagement meetings and participated in key state meetings to highlight the success of USHBC's initiatives and facilitate exploratory discussions regarding a potential assessment increase.
- ★ Launched SMS text messaging to deliver news and updates.
- ★ Purchased a full-page ad in the *Global State of the Blueberry Industry Report* from the International Blueberry Organization (IBO).

The USHBC website continued to see strong traffic in 2025, with over 10,000 visitors and nearly 38,000 page views. Top pages were the homepage, the Data and Insights Center, BerrySmart dashboards and events pages. Downloads were also strong, with a total of 3,620.



“

USHBC serves growers – both domestic and international – importers and exporters, and marketers, as well as others integral to the blueberry industry supply chain.



Industry Engagement



Podcast Reaches Listeners Worldwide

“The Business of Blueberries” podcast reached a milestone of 115,000+ all-time downloads, with just under 18,000 downloads in 2025 alone – up 7% from 2024. Thirty-four episodes were produced in 2025.

The most popular episodes in 2025 were: “Berry Business Leadership: A Conversation With Garland Reiter Jr.,” “Farming, Finance and The Future With JC Clinard of Frutura” and “Wade Jackson on Berry Genetics at Family Tree Farms.”



115,000
DOWNLOADS

The Business of Blueberries
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

SUBSCRIBE



COUNTRIES THAT TUNED IN



On a daily basis, the principle part of my job is to try to share with our customers the importance of focusing on the consumer. The importance there and how you get that message to a consumer is by branding. And so sharing with them the value chain that we invest on the genetics, we invest on the supply chain, and we invest on the brand . . . The job of the first clamshell is to sell the next clamshell.
– *Garland Reiter Jr., Driscoll's*



I believe demand will continue to increase for blueberries, but I think that there is a whole other level of demand increase that we can take advantage of and capture if we're strategic.
– *JC Clinard, Frutura*

Data and Insights

USHBC empowers growers, marketers and stakeholders with the data-driven clarity needed to navigate the global marketplace. Through its data and insights initiatives, the council provides real-time, actionable business intelligence – including aggregated production, pricing and sales data, shopper insights and foodservice menu trends – that allows for more precise benchmarking and strategic planning.

By bridging the gap between raw data and industry innovation, USHBC ensures that every segment of the blueberry supply chain is equipped to turn insights into a competitive advantage, ultimately fueling the mission to make blueberries the world’s favorite fruit.

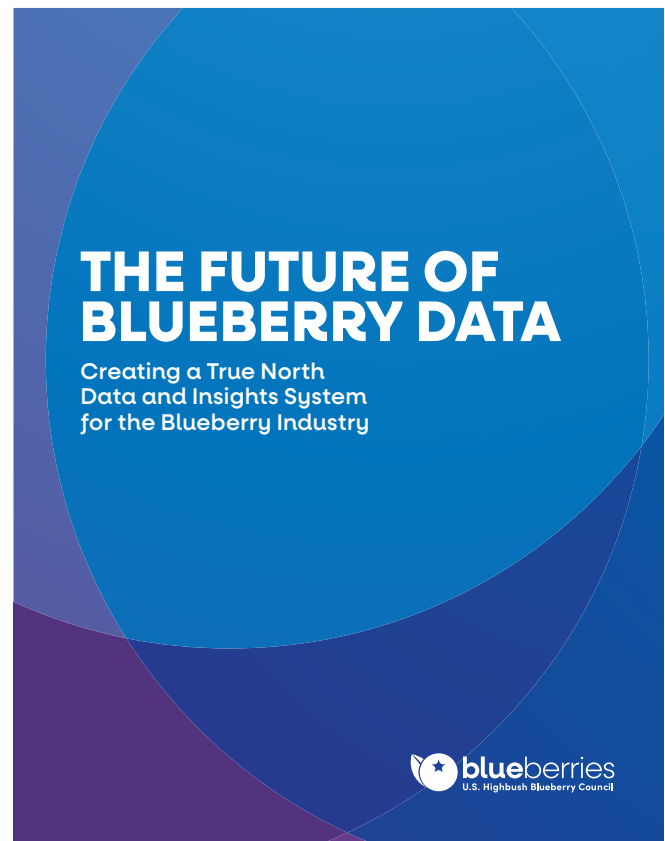
Blueberry Data & Intelligence Summit

The first-ever Blueberry Data & Intelligence Summit was held June 4-6 in Santa Clara, California. During the two-day event, 36 attendees representing a cross section of growers, marketers and industry organization representatives took a deep dive into the state of the blueberry industry’s data and insights tools, and rolled up their sleeves to imagine what could be improved, and what tools and resources could support that improvement.



The event helped inform what an industry-owned and industry-driven blueberry data and insights system might look like, outlined how it would differ from existing data sources and established next steps for building this collaborative future.

Post-event, we published a white paper titled *The Future of Blueberry Data: Creating a True North Data and Insights System for the Blueberry Industry*, which recapped the recommendations that emerged from the event and outlined next steps in creating a data and insights system the blueberry industry can count on.



Data and Insights

BerrySmart Initiatives

In 2025, the USHBC continued its focus on providing accurate and insightful data to guide blueberry industry decision-makers in making critical business calls. This work showcases the council's 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 Insights

USHBC continued to invest in people and technology to improve the quality of and access to real-time blueberry production and pricing data.

The BerrySmart Insights platform provides aggregated and anonymized data in real time to provide a benchmark of the fresh blueberry market in the United States. Contributing growers and marketers are using BerrySmart Insights to compare their performance and inform their 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, Camposol, United Exports, Good Farms, Fruitist and Hortifruit.

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 continued advancing its work through BerrySmart Field, a collaborative initiative bringing together growers, researchers and technology providers to optimize blueberry farming operations by focusing on soil health, nutrient management, disease pressure, yield distribution, weather, chemical inputs and labor throughout the growing season.

The initiative expanded to the East Coast, with new farm participation in New Jersey and Florida, broadening the geographic scope and strengthening regional data insights. Through this growing network, USHBC continues its partnership with innov8.ag to validate a smart farm model that enables blueberry growers, packers and stakeholders across sales, technology and research to collaborate on farm optimization – driving more efficient production and more predictable yield outcomes across diverse growing regions.



BerrySmart Food Safety

In partnership with the BerrySmart Food Safety Task Force, USHBC continued to maintain and enhance its dedicated Food Safety Resource page, providing growers with timely access to updates and information on key food safety issues, including the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) final rule on preharvest agricultural water.

Throughout year two, the task force regularly reviewed and updated the resource page to ensure growers have access to the most current guidance and industry-relevant information.



BerrySmart Sustainability

New this year, USHBC, in partnership with the BerrySmart Sustainability Task Force, launched a comprehensive Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for the U.S. blueberry industry – a foundational step in quantifying the industry’s environmental footprint and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

Through data-driven initiatives like the LCA and the ongoing leadership of the BerrySmart Sustainability Task Force, the industry is proactively taking ownership of its environmental story – measuring impact, benchmarking performance and demonstrating a strong commitment to responsible, sustainable agriculture.



Looking ahead, sustainability will remain a strategic priority and a foundation for continued growth, innovation and shared success across the entire blueberry supply chain.



Published by



81 Blue Ravine Road, Suite 110
Folsom, California 95630

916.983.0111

ushbc.org (Industry)

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