



Bleuets NB Blueberries

Field Notes

UPCOMING EVENTS

July

BNBB Field Day

Granite Town Farms

District 1

Saturday, July 12, 2014

See enclosed information

Maine Field Day

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

Jonesboro, Maine

Call Nancy England to

confirm participation

at (207) 581-1475.

WBPANS Field Day

Saturday, July 19, 2014

Debert, NS

(902) 662-3306

September

Open Farm Day

Sunday, September 21, 2014

Agricultural Alliance of N.B.

(506) 452-8101

alliance@fermeNBfarm.ca

October

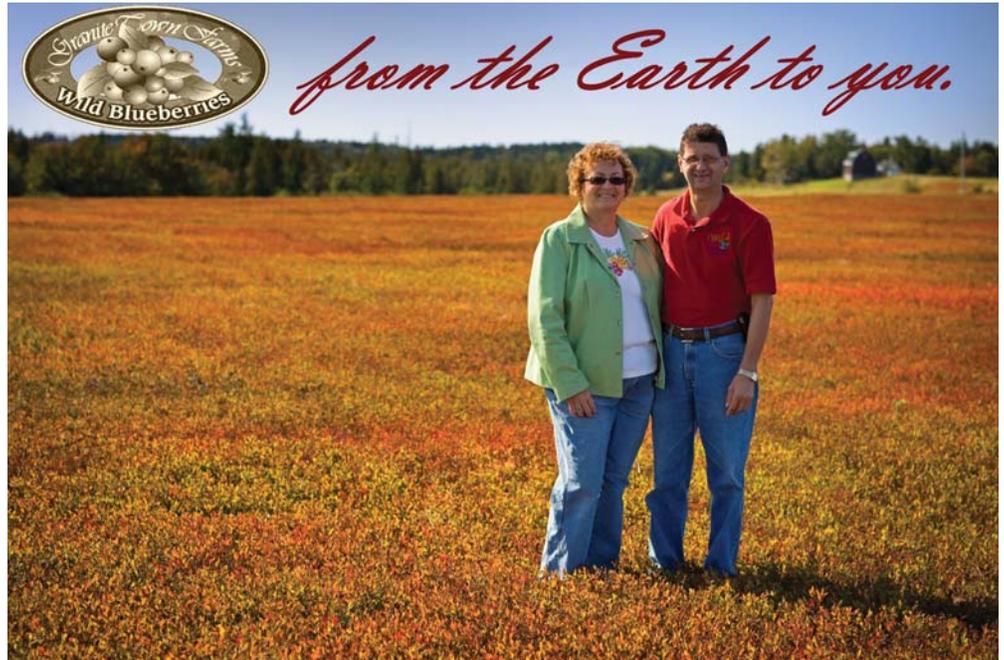
WBANA Symposium

Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Hilton, Quebec city

neri.vautour@nb.aibn.com

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Farming with enthusiasm at Granite Town Farms

What Beth and David Hatt lacked in experience when they started their farm in the mid-1980s, they more than made up for in enthusiasm.

The Hatts own Granite Town Farms, working 500 acres of wild blueberries spread out over a 50 mile radius from the small southwestern New Brunswick community of St. George. While growing up, David gained some experience in wild blueberry farming. Beth's background was in record keeping and forestry. The gaps in their knowledge and the lack of farm land were not a deterrent; therefore, the couple put their love of the land to work for them.

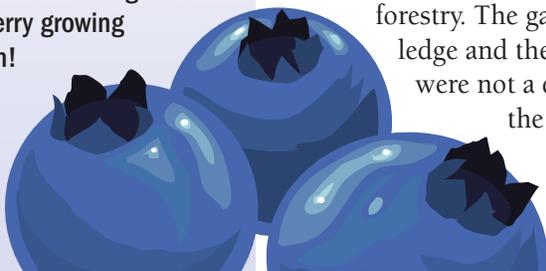
"We aren't afraid of hard work," Beth recalls. They had two other major motivators, she adds. "We wanted to bring our children up in this area. The second motivation: we weren't in this for the money – but we loved what we did."

At the time they started the farm, both were employed with J.D. Irving Ltd., Beth in the forestry division and David with JDI and Cavendish Farms. When a change in David's role was on the horizon, they made the move to instead go into business for themselves. During the first few years, they both kept part-time jobs, working to grow, expand and diversify their wild blueberry operation at the same time until they could both work full-time at Granite Town Farms.

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Farmer:

A person outstanding in their field – BNBB wishes you an outstanding wild blueberry growing season!



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Today, their operation has various divisions: agriculture, value-added, agritourism and a Stihl dealership.

The value-added division of the business was added in the early 1990s, again happening because of Beth and David's hard work, determination and vision. They were leaders in the food industry, opening one of the first small kitchens approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. But they did not want to create just any kind of product.

Driven by the desire to produce a product she would purchase herself to feed to her own family, Beth says the value-added side of Granite Town Farms was focused – and remains committed – to a vision of the creation of quality and unique products. The gourmet products like wild blueberry jam, salsas, sauces and many specialties are made right on top of a stove, carefully watched and stirred before the bottles are filled and hand-labelled.

The philosophy of operating the value-added division like this is embodied in Granite Town Farm's motto, *From the Earth to You*.

Once the value-added line was operational, though, Beth says they felt like they wanted more interaction with their customers. They wanted to create the opportunity to tell the story of the food they were selling and the wild blueberries that created the products. This time, the Hatts expanded and diversified their business again, towards agritourism so customers could see more of the operation.

"We started feeling like we wanted to host customers and create an experience here," Beth says. Now, between May and September, Granite Town Farms hosts many tourists, coming



One of Granite Town's value added products

on excursions from cruise ships docked in Saint John, visitors from the nearby resort town of St.-Andrews-by-the-Sea or those who stop in on their way by. Because of their reputation for drawing in crowds, Granite Town Farms is also the municipal tourist information centre.

Beth points out that "wild blueberry farming is not your traditional farming and many farms are diversified. You're not living on the farm, as your land is usually spread around the county and you're always on a two year cycle."

Over the years, the addition of the Stihl dealership was a natural fit since David was already providing equipment and services for other blueberry producers in the region.

From the beginning of Granite Town Farms, Beth says they had a lot to learn on the fly – and it is not like wild blueberries are like other crops where inter-provincial trade and national issues play key roles. As a crop concentrated in the Eastern Seaboard, the import/export system and processing sector is unique.

Today, Granite Town Farms has grown to maintain a core staff of nine full-time and part-time workers.



David and Beth Hatt with Minister Mike Olscamp

During the summer when production and tourism season is at its peak, about 60 work at the facility.

The development and growth of Granite Town Farms fits with the personality of Beth and David. Beth says they have always been ones to take on challenges with gusto. The result has been the creation of a business that matches the way they view life and creative new ways to diversify the business have always been welcomed.

"From the time I was a child, I don't remember going with the flow," Beth says. "I like to do my own thing. I like creating... you take what you have and you make something out of it... that's exciting."

David is also the innovator on the agronomic side of the business and is responsible for providing a quality primary product.

And while retirement, or maybe slowing down a bit, has crossed their minds, the idea quickly gets brushed aside.

"We get older and we get more tired, but we can't picture doing anything else," Beth says.

Allison Finnamore
Cultivating Communications
www.cultivatingcommunications.ca

Annual Field Day

Saturday, July 12, 2014, 10 am

Granite Town Farms

Owners: David and Beth Hatt

151 Brunswick Street, St. George, NB

www.wildblueberry.ca

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Algonquin Resort in St. Andrews By-the-Sea at a preferred rate of \$159.00. Ask for the Provincial Blueberry Field Day block.

Parking available on site.

\$15 per person (includes lunch).

Producers are encouraged to bring weed, insect and disease samples for identification.

For information 506-459-2583

bnbb@nb.aibn.com

nbwildblue.ca



Preliminary Agenda

9:30 am Registration

10 to 11 am

Welcoming remarks and introduction:

Murray Tweedie

Description of business: Beth Hatt

Update on activities: Syndicat des Producteurs de Bleuets du Québec et Club Conseil Bleuets du Québec

11 am to 12 pm

Technical and Information displays as well as networking opportunities

- Equipment Display
- NBDAAF Crop and Pest Management Specialist staff
- WBANA Canada

12 to 1 pm **Lunch** near site (Curling Club)

1:30 pm **Field tour**

2014 Weed Control Trials

Gavin Graham PAg., Weed Management Specialist

New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (NBDAAF)

With the assistance of Bleuets NB Blueberries and the Enabling Agricultural Research and Innovation (EARI) Program of Growing Forward 2, fifteen weed control trials are planned on wild blueberry fields across New Brunswick over this season. The overall goal of the project is to generate weed control and crop tolerance data for a range of herbicides and application timings which will support the registration of innovative and cost-effective weed management tools in wild blueberry production. This project will evaluate tank-mix partners and control options for hard to control weeds within current New Brunswick blueberry production, including poverty oatgrass, ticklegrass, fescues, hawkweed and burnweed.

The main focus for new trials in 2014 will be to evaluate pre-emergent herbicide tank mixes. Hopefully, these

trials will help to ensure growers are using the most cost-effective and safe herbicide treatments within the sprout year. This summer, it is planned to visit one trial at each of the BNBB tailgate sessions, so growers can see the trial results and ask questions on weed control.

Trials are conducted in cooperation with local growers, who graciously provided land access for these trials and NBDAAF staff who assisted with locating and conducting the trials. I personally would like to thank all collaborating growers, who make this research possible.

Results from these trials will be used to support future User Requested Minor Use Label Expansions (URMULE) to increase the weed control toolbox for wild blueberry producers in New Brunswick. The information will also be used to update the Wild Blueberry IPM



Figure 1. Example of a new herbicide trial which will be sprayed with different herbicide treatments.

Weed Management Guide as new registrations become available. Any suggestions regarding which weed problems to focus on in the future, treatments that should be evaluated or other questions can be directed to Gavin Graham at gavin.graham@gnb.ca or at (506) 453-3486. Once again, I would like to thank the collaborating growers and BNBB for their support for this research.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR Murray Tweedie

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jamie Morrison, who retired in April, for his years of service to BNBB as Secretary Manager. As well, thank you Brett (Reidpath) for the time and energy you have spent in the interest of the wild blueberry growers of New Brunswick as Chairman of the Board for BNBB over the last two years.

It is with great enthusiasm that we introduce Monique Mills as the new Secretary Manager for BNBB to replace Jamie. Monique brings with her a strong background in agriculture and agricultural related organizations. She has been the Executive Director of the New Brunswick Agricultural Council (NBAC) for the past 9 years. The NBAC is an industry led Council which has administered funds from specific programs initiated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for the past 20 years. Monique has studied agronomy at Laval University in Quebec. She is fluently bilingual

and is an alumnus of the Atlantic Agricultural Leadership Program as well as the Cultivate – Strategic Agricultural Leadership program of Richard Ivey School of Business in London, Ontario. With her agricultural background, pleasant personality and business-like approach, we believe she will provide a very positive influence in any dealings relating to our organization or to our industry in general.

We are entering an era within our industry that will present many challenges. There are issues relating to new pests and diseases that must be researched, access to and equitable distribution of Crown lands, fair value for our product – to name only a few. To overcome our challenges and to meet our goals, it is incumbent upon all of us as producers to work together in a true spirit of co-operation if we are to survive as independent farmers and business people. We must all contribute in a positive manner



toward a healthier, more vibrant industry, to embrace the challenges and move forward together with frank and open discussion amongst ourselves, with government, with processors and with our neighboring producers in other provinces and in Maine. We must never allow ourselves to be divided – lest we fall!

With best wishes to all for a safe and fruitful year.

MESSAGE FROM THE OUT-GOING CHAIR Brett Reidpath

As I park the fertilizer spreader for the day and review my emails, I see a neglected email from Monique Mills asking me to send in a few words as outgoing chair for the newsletter. As the bees are all in, and with only a couple days left of fertilizing, things look like they are under control enough to take a few minutes and hammer out a few words.

It is a great opportunity to say thank you to a few well deserving people that helped make the job an enjoyable and rewarding experience. At the top of that list are the many producers of the province who supported me and shared their experience and knowledge with me. Indeed, one of the

greatest rewards of being chair is the fact that it allowed me to meet many veteran growers around the province whose advice proved as valuable as the fruit they grow.

Of course the job would be an insurmountable task if it weren't for my fellow board members and staff of BNBB. Each person brought to the board a skill set or view that indeed proved that as a whole we were certainly greater than the sum of our parts.

I wish the best of luck to our new chair, Murray Tweedie. His passion for farming and work ethic will surely bring our association to the next level.



Together with the capable and determined Monique Mills, I am certain that the future of BNBB will be a great one indeed.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY MANAGER **Monique Mills**

First of all, I would like to thank the Board of Directors of BNBB for the confidence they showed in me when selecting me to the position of Secretary Manager of BNBB. I have barely been in my functions for a couple of months now and I have already witnessed a constant buzz of activity around our organization. I am learning that there are many players in this industry and everyone seems engaged, passionate and ready to give it their all for the benefit of the wild blueberry sector.

Therefore, I am both excited to be part of this thriving sector and at the same time vigilant to make sure I

understand the challenges we face to better organize ourselves and prepare for the future. Because, despite the success, as an organization, we still have many challenges to face. Meeting the expectations and requirements of our members, developing trust, improving our communications, establishing partnerships and developing production research projects are only a few elements to improve, build up.

As the new Secretary Manager of your organization I can assure you that first and foremost, the perception that I have of my role is to work for you, the member.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1

Counties: Charlotte, Saint John, Kings, Queens, Sunbury, York and Carleton

John Ness
Russell Weir
Ed Goguen

District 2

Counties: Westmorland, Albert, Kent and Northumberland excluding the parish of Alnwick

Murray Tweedie
> Chair
Kathy Trueman Del Villar
> WBANA Board Representative
Brett Reidpath

District 3

Counties: Gloucester, Restigouche, Madawaska and Victoria and the parish of Alnwick in Northumberland county

Arsène Roussel
> Vice Chair
Norbert Brideau
Vernon Losier

Office Hours

The hours of operation for the office are: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursdays from 9:00 to 5:00. The BNBB office is located in the Strickland Building annex to the Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre at 680 Strickland Lane in Fredericton.

Meet our Summer Student

Hello everybody,

My name is Josée Maillet and I am the student that will be working for BNBB during this summer. I am a UNB student and I recently finished my second year of the nursing program. I realize that nursing and agriculture aren't quite related; however, I am very excited to learn as much as possible about this field and do my best to help out the association. Who knows, maybe I'll be able to teach some of my patients about the benefits of eating wild blueberries!



Have you visited the website recently?

The BNBB website has a fresh, new look and expanded content for growers. We invite you to use the Log In section to set up an account, so that you can access news, updates, grower information and links to other sites of interest to our industry. BNBB reviews the website regularly to make improvements and add information. If you have ideas or suggestions for the website, please call the BNBB office at (506) 459-2583 or send an email to bnbb@nb.aibn.com.



www.nbwildblue.ca



Wyman's new freezing line win-win-win for company, growers and customers

The new freezing line at Wyman's Blueberry Plant in Morell, P.E.I., is exciting news for the blueberry growers in the Maritime Provinces who supply it.

Wade Dover, the plant's operations manager, says the addition of the second line to the operations is expected to take its processing capacity from nine million pounds of blueberries annually to the 20 million pound range. It also means doubling the workforce from between 70 and 100 seasonal workers to 140 and 200. And, being forward looking, Wyman's \$18.5 million expansion of the plant includes enough space to add a third line within, it hopes, the next five years, further adding to its processing capacity and workforce numbers.

Dover says the reason behind the expansion was because of Wyman's aggressive growth since purchasing the processing plant on the Island in 1996. In the past five years, it has increased the land base of its farming operations 10 times, extended its land ownership into New Brunswick and increased the number of growers it buys from in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Plus, they added cranberries to their repertoire in the past six years,



processing upwards of one million pounds of cranberries annually.

"To accommodate the growth, we were shipping additional fruit to another Jasper Wyman & Son's facilities in Maine," he says. "We relied on them the past five years but had become a burden on them; they needed to increase capacity and decided to do that in P.E.I."

For local growers, the added capacity means berries don't have to travel as far to be processed. Less trucking means cost savings but it also means berries are frozen sooner, so fresher, to bring customers a better product.

"This offers a quick turnaround for local growers and improves our ability to service them well," says Dover, explaining they are now able to return empty containers faster so growers can keep picking. "We can now concentrate on our respective areas; we do not need to supply product to the States."

Wyman's invested a lot in the research and development of the new freezing line's cleaning process – the key to a high quality product and one of the greatest challenges they face since blueberries grow close to the ground and are mechanically harvested.

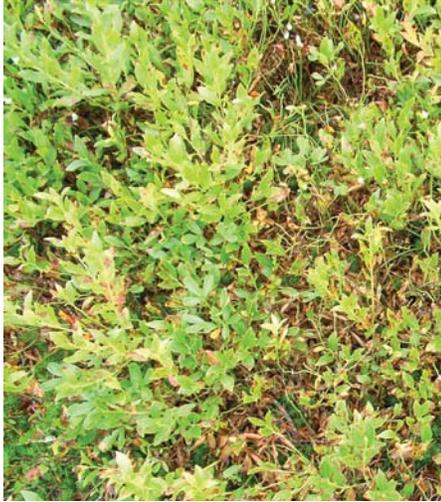
"We buy a lot of leaves and dirt and we have to remove those," he says, adding, "Everyone can freeze a blueberry but not everyone can clean a blueberry. We're hoping to be leaders in that."

To develop the freezing line, Wyman's worked closely with its Asian clients to find out their concerns and issues and addressed them. "That's what's gone into the development of this line," says Dover. "They demand high standards, rightfully so. If we can service the Asian market, we can keep everybody happy."

A leading grower, processor and marketer of wild blueberries, Wyman's prides itself in providing berries that are "fresher than fresh." It sorts, cleans and processes its wild blueberries within hours of being picked, using winnowing machines in the fields to remove twigs and leaves during harvesting. The berries are then individually quick frozen and colour laser sorters used to remove all but the finest berries.

Just as they are committed to providing a high quality product to their customers, the Wyman's family is committed to the Maritimes.

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Valdensinia leaf spot
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW BRUNSWICK DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES

Field Management for Optimal ROI

The Importance of the Sprout Year

This article has been prepared by a Syngenta representative to give growers general information on leaf diseases.

By: Jim Anderson, Agronomic Service Representative, Syngenta Canada
and Leigh Jenkins, Blueberry Farmer

Setting your crop up for success

Getting your crop going on the right foot aptly applies to blueberry production, particularly as you look to drive optimal yields in years to come. To set your crop up for success and increase yield potential, an important step is to maintain the health of your plants in the sprout year.

The importance of the sprout year

Keeping your blueberry plants healthy by minimizing disease in the sprout year will help your stands produce a higher bud count. And as we all know, more buds leads to more blossoms – and more blueberries – in the fruit year.

When disease pressure is not actively managed in the sprout year, you run the risk of an infestation that could directly impact yield. Assessing your fields' disease history is the first step to determining if your crop requires a more intensive disease control program. If you have experienced disease pressure in the past, there is a high likelihood that spores have overwintered in debris, and if left untreated, could infect new sprouts and leaves in the spring.

We recommend scouting your fields early in the season, especially after rainy weather, as a proactive way to identify problem areas. *Septoria* leaf spot will manifest as tiny lesions on the underside of leaves, while *Valdensinia* leaf spot lesions are typically brown and circular, with darker colouring around the outside

of the lesion. If left untreated, infected leaves will begin to drop prematurely, which will directly impact crop yield the following year.

If higher yields are a driver for you, we recommend a proactive approach to disease management with planned fungicide applications. Because leaf and stem diseases are quite prevalent in blueberry growing regions of New Brunswick, they can spread well before a problem is detected. A good rule of thumb is to schedule your first fungicide spray when the canopy is almost filled (mid-June) to protect new plant material from key diseases such as *Septoria* leaf spot, *Valdensinia* leaf spot, *Phomopsis* canker and twig blight, then follow up in early August with a second foliar fungicide application for optimal protection. It is easier to prevent disease from taking hold rather than trying to rectify the situation post-infection!

In the sprout year, stems can grow approximately 10-12 inches, and keeping that new plant material green and healthy for as long as possible is one of the best ways to increase yield potential in the fruiting year. Why? Because during the sprout year, plants are working hard to store up the energy necessary to produce high-quality fruit in the crop year.

At Syngenta, we're committed to helping you grow your best crop. We feel that maintaining the health of your plants in the sprout year can help to increase your yield potential in the fruit year.

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"This investment in P.E.I. shows the importance of growers to them and the business," says Dover. "This will help them with their harvest needs. No one wants to transport berries long distances."

Trudy Kelly Forsythe
Cultivating Communications
www.cultivatingcommunications.ca

Checking Sprout Fields for Sucking Bugs

In sprout fields, sucking bugs damage shoots by killing the growing point. This causes the sprout to branch and delays the production of fruit buds. Sucking bug damage occurs throughout the growing season but becomes common in July, August and September. If sprouts damaged by sucking bugs have early leaf drop due to rust infection the late forming fruit buds will be small. Even if rust is controlled, late growth can be a problem since it remains susceptible to damage by sucking bugs and is at a greater risk of winter damage.

Sucking bugs do not cause vigorous growth in sprout fields but they are attracted to these fields to feed.

If your sprout fields do not have vigorous growth then you are at a lower risk of damage from these insects. If however, you have sprout fields with a lot of vigorous growth then you should check them for the presence of these insects.

Sucking bugs are easy to catch using a sweep net, start checking fields in July and continue until the sprouts have completed tip dieback. Sprouts that have started to form buds are resistant to sucking bug damage. There are a number of non-related sucking bugs found in blueberry sprout fields, including; (1) tarnished plant bugs, (2) leaf hoppers and (3) seed bugs. There is no established threshold but based on observations in 2013 the threshold is likely to be quite low, perhaps only 1 or 2 sucking bugs per sweep. Sucking bugs feed, and multiply on many other types of plants and crops. This means that



late in the summer they can show up suddenly and in large numbers in blueberry sprout fields.

These insects are also found in cropping fields but it is not known what damage their feeding causes to the crop. Cropping fields that were damaged in the previous sprout year produce many leafy shoots but less bloom. Growth of these shoots causes the blossoms and fruit to be located within the crop canopy instead of on top. This increases the risk of Botrytis blight and lowers harvesting efficiency.

There are no insecticides currently registered for sucking bug control on blueberry but some of the insecticides used to control other pests on blueberry may be effective on sucking bugs. Since leaf rust is also active in July and August insecticide applications should be tank mixed with a fungicide when possible.

Kelvin Lynch
IPM Solutions

Insecticide Screening Trials for the Management of Sucking bugs on Wild Blueberry

Funding for this proposal was recently approved under the Crop and Livestock Health and Quality program of Growing Forward 2. Bleuets NB Blueberries is the applicant and Kelvin Lynch of IPM Solutions is the project leader. The project was initiated to address a new insect pest problem and brings together BNBB, cooperating growers in all three Districts, NBDAAF, IPM Solutions, Gaetan Chiasson and pesticide registrants in an effort to identify effective insecticides for a new and damaging group of blueberry pests. This trial will help gain the information needed on product selection and timing in order to build a set of recommendations for the management of sucking bugs in wild blueberry production.

These screening trials are conducted with local producers where six on-farm trials are performed to evaluate insecticide efficacy. The screenings will take place in July and August; the information gained will be distributed to growers by the BNBB website and email. We thank in advance all participating growers!



Bleuets NB Blueberries