



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
NEW ENGLAND FIELD OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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USDA TO CONDUCT 2008 MAINE WILD BLUEBERRY FORECAST SURVEY

Concord, New Hampshire – New England Agricultural Statistics will be contacting Maine wild blueberry growers in July to participate in the 2008 wild blueberry forecast survey. The results of this survey help promote industry growth by supplying important data to all involved in production and marketing. Maine is the number one producer of wild blueberries nationally and is the only state which publishes wild blueberry statistics in the USDA's *Noncitrus Fruits and Nuts Release*. This study was requested and funded by the Maine State Department of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources, and administered by the New England field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

"The Wild Blueberry Growers Survey is the only chance to officially forecast production for the 2008 crop by NASS," explained Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. Approximately 450 Maine growers will be asked for their help in this effort to forecast production. The survey is mailed in mid-June with a phone follow-up in mid-July.

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. "NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified," stated Keough.

NASS will contact Maine wild blueberry growers by mail or telephone and ask them to provide information on their acreage and expected production. The information will be compiled and analyzed, then published in the Maine Wild Blueberries report from the New England Agricultural Statistics on July 31, 2008. This report will be available on the Internet at www.nass.usda.gov/nh. Complimentary copies will be mailed to survey participants upon request.

Final production and value estimates for the 2007 Maine wild blueberry crop will be available in the *Noncitrus Fruit and Nut Report* from Washington, D.C. on July 8, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. All reports from Washington, D.C. are available on the Internet at www.nass.usda.gov.

For more information on NASS surveys and reports, contact the NASS New England Field Office at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov.