



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture

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USDA TO FORECAST 2004 WILD BLUEBERRY CROP

The New England Agricultural Statistics Service will be contacting Maine wild blueberry growers in July 2004 to participate in the annual wild blueberry survey. The results of this survey help to 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 published for wild blueberry statistics in the annual 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.

Last year, Maine's wild blueberry crop totaled 80.2 million pounds, an increase of 29 percent from the 2002 output but 28 percent below the record production set in 2000. Rain showers received in early August aided berry size and quality and resulted in the final production being slightly higher than initial forecast. Once again Maine's wild blueberry growers will be asked for their current year estimated production.

The Wild Blueberry Growers Survey is the only chance to officially forecast production for the 2004 crop. Approximately 500 Maine growers will be asked for their help in this effort to forecast production and determine the average price growers received for last year's crop. The survey is mailed in mid-June with a phone follow-up in early July. As with all our survey work, individual operator information is kept strictly confidential and is exempt from requests under the Freedom of Information Act. Individual reports are used in combination with other grower reports to generate State level wild blueberry statistics for Maine.

The wild blueberry production forecast is released in the **Maine Wild Blueberry** report from the New England Agricultural Statistics Service at the end of July. This report is available on the Internet (www.nass.usda.gov/nh/), and complimentary copies are mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six States in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through e-mail at nass-nh@nass.usda.gov. All national statistics and state level newsletters are available through free e-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at www.usda.gov/nass/.]

For More Information Contact: Dave Mikelson at 1-800-642-9571 ext: 121.