



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 2002 WILD BLUEBERRY CROP

Maine's 2001 wild blueberry crop was 75.2 million pounds, 32 percent below the record production in 2000 and 14 percent above the 1999 output. Drought conditions, which lasted from late July until harvest, dramatically decreased yields on non-irrigated fields. Disease and insects were not significant problems in 2001; however, the dry conditions forced some growers to completely abandon selected fields.

With unknowns such as pollination conditions and unpredictable weather, there is always uncertainty about the size of this year's crop. To help the industry prepare for the upcoming crop, USDA publishes an annual forecast of Maine wild blueberry production every July. This study is requested and funded by the Maine State Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, and is 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 2002 crop. Approximately 500 Maine growers will be asked for their help in this effort to forecast production and measure the final price received for last year's crop. The survey is mailed in mid-June and non-respondents are called in early July. As with all our survey work, individual operator information is kept strictly confidential and is even exempt from requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The individual reports are only used in combination to generate 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, but complimentary copies are also 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/.]

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