



For Immediate Release
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Wild blueberry health research showcased on national stage

-Wild Blueberry Association of North America participates in 2009 Berry Health Benefits Symposium-

Toronto, Canada. Leading scientists studying the health properties of wild blueberries presented their latest findings related to the positive link between antioxidant-rich berry consumption and disease prevention at the 2009 Berry Health Benefits Symposium. Wild blueberries have been central to research exploring the role of diet in disease prevention and management of age-related health risks. Recent discoveries attribute potential health benefits of the wild blueberry to antioxidants such as anthocyanin, anti-inflammatories and other natural compounds found throughout the deep blue wild blueberry. Wild blueberries have the highest antioxidant capacity per serving compared with more than 20 other fruits (Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, 2004; 52:4026-4037). Antioxidants help protect against disease and age-related health risks by battling against free radicals - unstable oxygen molecules associated with cancer, heart disease and the effects of aging. In addition to fighting oxidative stress, wild blueberries are now thought to have powerful anti-inflammatory properties.

According to Susan Davis, MS, RD, nutrition advisor to the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA), researchers are active in many areas of study. "Research is underway exploring the potential positive effects of wild blueberry consumption on vision, cardiovascular health, protecting the brain from age-related deficits like Alzheimer's and dementia, and cancer prevention," said Davis. "The National Berry Symposium offered researchers the opportunity to share insights about the health-promoting potential of native berries like wild blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, raspberries and blackberries," continued Davis.

"The Wild Blueberry Association of North America is committed to educating consumers on the health benefits of wild blueberries" says WBANA president, Neri Vautour.

“The industry is committed to providing easy access for consumers to purchase wild blueberries in the frozen foods section of their local grocery store. Look for the words wild blueberries on the packaging and enjoy year round,” continued Vautour.

Wild blueberry research has been led by a core group known as the Bar Harbor Group. Leading scientists from Canada and the U.S. participated in an annual health research summit recently held in Monterey, California, to share current findings and advance collaborations into new areas.

The Berry Health Benefits Symposium is an outgrowth of efforts by the National Berry Crops Initiative (NBCI), a partnership of industry, academia and government focused on policy and programs that support the continued growth and sustainability of berry crops including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, cultivated blueberries, cranberries, lingonberries, currants and gooseberries. WBANA Canada -- because of its close working relationship with WBANA U.S. -- is the first association outside of the United States to participate in this symposium. The NBCI fosters berry health benefits research as well as promotion of related health and nutrition benefits.

About WBANA

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA) is an international trade association of growers and processors of wild blueberries from Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Maine, dedicated to bringing the wild blueberry health story and unique wild advantages to consumers and the trade worldwide. To learn more about wild blueberries visit www.wildblueberries.com.

For more information on the Wild Blueberry Association of North America, recipes, visuals or an interview, please contact Susan Willemsen or Renee Lalonde at The Siren Group Inc. Tel: 416-926-8087. Fax: 416-926-9712. E-mail: info@thesirengroup.com or www.thesirengroup.com