

Report of the
Blueberry Working Group
of the Apple and Fruit Committee

To the 94th Annual General Meeting of the
Canadian Horticultural Council
Ottawa, Ontario

March 10, 2016

**To the President and Members of the
Canadian Horticultural Council**

The Blueberry Working Group (BWG) met once by teleconference following the 2015 CHC AGM. The development of a National Blueberry Research and Innovation Strategy as well as crop protection issues (Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) in particular) remained the dominant topics of discussion over the course of this last year, as was the case for the year prior.

During the 2015 AGM an important resolution was adopted that requested that the Canadian Horticultural Council work with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to ensure the emergency registration of Bifenthrin (Capture) so that it may be used for the 2015 harvest season. This resolution sought to allow emergency use of Bifenthrin for BC Blueberry growers to combat Spotted Wing Drosophila. CHC staff was present at meetings with the Pest Management Regulatory Authority shortly after the AGM and were also able to coordinate national blueberry industry support for this resolution through the Blueberry Working Group. This is evidence of the importance of industry working together through CHC.

The National Blueberry Research and Innovation Strategy seeks to articulate stakeholder priorities for research and innovation in the Canadian industry over the next five (5) to ten (10) years and provides guidance on addressing these priorities through new and existing collaborations. It is generally accepted within the industry that while most all provincial blueberry associations had guiding strategic documents, no over-arching blueberry research and innovation strategy on a National scale exists.

The intent is for the strategy to build on the Blueberry industry's regional strengths under a national collaboration and it will seek to provide the Canadian blueberry industry with sustainable technologies to remain at the forefront of competitiveness in an increasingly global market. It is anticipated that this process will produce a workable action plan that can be used to secure additional funding that will benefit the industry.

The intended work to develop the strategy will be conducted through a comprehensive consultation process. The use of a variety of platforms and methods to gather information as widely as possible is contemplated. To ensure project success an appropriate governance structure will be established to manage the project. It is intended that the group will include representatives from all regions involved so the information can be widely exchanged.

Following significant outreach and coordination work to support the development of a framework for the national strategy, the final proposal was submitted for federal government support at the end of November 2015 to AAFC's Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program.

Early in January 2016 CHC staff were advised by AAFC that priority setting exercises such as research and innovation strategies, the development of strategic plans, and the development of research and innovation strategies were considered to be activities that are part of normal business practices and are not what this particular program was intended to accomplish.

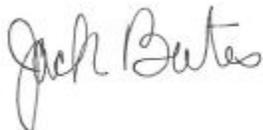
Despite this setback, CHC staff persisted and was able to obtain a roundtable meeting with AAFC program representatives to determine how this valuable initiative could be accomplished. As a result we have just recently learned that an opening for funding of this project is available through the current CHC Science Cluster initiatives and that in fact this opening has been created for all commodities within CHC's mandate. In fact, if successful, this approach will also be an excellent way of producing the strategy and priorities needed as we approach submissions for the renewed science cluster projects under the eventual Growing Forward framework to begin in 2018.

Blueberry Working Group Membership

The working group was pleased to see the arrival of several new members over the course of the year including the active participation from representatives from Quebec. While conducting its outreach activities the group was also fortunate to have the input from several regional and provincial research professionals. Further, in outreach activities for the strategy initiative CHC staff garnered support from highbush blueberry producers in both Quebec and Nova Scotia, groups that were not previously involved with the CHC.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of the Blueberry Working Group and their staff for their participation and commitment to the advancement of the industry. I would also like to express my appreciation, on behalf of the group to the dedicated team at CHC for their help in advancing the interests of the blueberry sector.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jack Bates
Chair, Blueberry Working Group
March 10, 2016