

IPM Berry Marketing Program Taps Demand

OWEGO, N.Y. — For the second straight year, strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry growers in New York State (NYS) are set to draw in consumers who rate environmental stewardship as a major factor in their fruit and vegetable purchasing decisions.

Recently conducted surveys show consumers are "going for the green." Unlike trends for many specialty items, the demand for produce raised with environmentally directed practices is mainstream, not a niche market.

State berry growers are tapping in to the rapidly expanding consumer demand by using integrated pest management (IPM) practices and by receiving NYS IPM berry grower certification made possible through a progressive program created by the New York State Berry Growers Association (NYSBGA) and Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

The program, established in 1997, keys roadside stand, pick-your-own, and supermarket customers to berries raised with the

environment in mind. Along with the established locally grown and fresh identity, berries produced by certified growers carry the unique NYS IPM logo, spelling out that consumers can be sure the fruit they buy comes from farms using prescribed methods to enhance the environment.

In addition to grower certification, the program makes major efforts to deliver the IPM story to consumers. The NYSBGA has produced brochures and posters that explain how growers have taken the initiative to cut agricultural chemical use, incorporate environmentally-beneficial cultural practices, and plant new, disease-resistant varieties. The association is also working closely with retailers to ensure supermarket customers know berry growers in the state produce high quality fruit that not only tastes good but meets the demands for environmental responsibility.

According to Emil Ronchi, NYSBGA chairperson, New York growers are among the first in the nation to have such a program in

place.

"New York berry growers are heeding the consumer's desire for tasteful, locally grown berries that are raised with environmentally friendly farming methods," Ronchi said. "We're encouraging people to look for our label. Buying New York's IPM berries supports the local economy, and it supports environmentally friendly farming."

More than 50 association members joined forces to market berries under the IPM label last year. NYSBGA represents more than 200 growers in the state, and the berry industry in the state accounts for more than \$35 million annually.

Frank Wiles, an Owego grower and NYSBGA executive secretary, said the program is open this year to all strawberry, blueberry, and raspberry growers in the state. Targeted sign up deadline is May 1, although that date may be extended, he said.

IPM practices aim at reducing the amounts of agricultural chemicals applied to crops. To reduce

chemical use, IPM relies on scouting fields, spraying only when economic thresholds are met, and incorporating the latest research in varieties, diseases, and pests. Cultural practices include mulching with straw to reduce weeds, rotating crops to reduce soil pests, covering crops to reduce weeds, preserving bees and other beneficial insects, and determining fertilizer requirements by testing plant leaves.

Wiles said most berry growers in the state are already using IPM practices. To gain certification as an IPM grower, farmers need to be a member of NYSBGA, sign onto the program, document their spray

records, and receive verification of practices by an independent third party, he said.

The NYSBGA has hired Don Prostack of American IPM, a New Jersey-based consulting firm, to serve as independent certifier in 1998. Prostack and other American IPM employees will visit growers prior to harvest to help growers with their records, review practices, and verify their IPM status.

New York growers can learn more about the 1998 IPM Berry Marketing Program by contacting the NYSBGA, 3965 Waverly Road, Owego, NY 13827, (607) 687-2874, fax (607) 687-9172.

Leading Farmers Want More Biotechnology

PHILADELPHIA — There is no doubt about it — leading U.S. cotton, rice and soybean growers see new biotechnology developments as crucial for the continuance of profitably raising crops.

Past participants in the Producer Information Exchange (PIE) program were recently surveyed for their opinions about various aspects of farming leading into the spring planting season.

PIE participants are elite farmers chosen to tour other farming areas so that they can enhance their own farming techniques and gain an understanding of problems faced by their peers. Participants are chosen in cooperation with The Cotton Foundation, American Soybean Association, California Rice Growers, and Delta Council. Participants in PIE are often times officers in the commodity associations.

Nearly nine of every 10 past PIE participants responding to the survey rated future biotechnology developments as "very important" for the future of crop production.

It was also quite clear that higher yielding crop varieties are seen as the exact crop improvement that they see as most important. Nearly half of the responders referred to higher yielding varieties as the major need. Other crop

improvements such as varieties with specific end-user requested traits were much farther down the list in priority.

The survey was conducted by FMC Corporation who sponsors the PIE programs with grants to the various commodity groups.

"It was obvious from the responses that the growers completing the survey are leaders and regularly let their opinions be known," said Ed Cherry, FMC director of government regulations and agricultural business affairs, who oversees the PIE programs for FMC. "Nearly three-fourths of those responding to the survey had been in contact with their U.S. Congress representative or senator within the last 12 months."

"The survey gave us a good feel for what some of the best producers are thinking prior to this spring planting season," Cherry said. He notes that the 16 percent response to the 567 surveys mailed was quite good, but the numbers are not statistically valid.

"It was kind of discouraging to read all the resentment of government oversight being blamed for limiting companies from developing new technology products," Cherry said. "Nearly half the respondents suggested the government approval process for new products is a problem."

Specializing In Fibered Roof Coatings
(Over 2000 Colors To Choose From)

B&B Spray Painting

Quality That's Affordable

Roofs
Houses
Alu. Siding
Interior

Spray
Brush
Roll

(Restoration of Brick or Stone)

574 Gibbons Rd.
Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505

An. Serv. (717) 354-5561



A LESSON WELL LEARNED... LANCASTER FARMING'S CLASSIFIED ADS GET RESULTS!

Belarus 8011 • 8045
8000 SERIES TRACTORS
8311 • 8345

BELARUS VALUE. IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

The 8000 Series from Belarus is a new generation of tractors for a new generation of farmers. But like always, Belarus tractors are strong on dependability and easy on your pocketbook.

The 8000 Series has four versatile models to suit your individual needs. Choose from the two wheel drive 8011 and 8311 or the tough four wheel drive of our 8045 and 8345. Each comes equipped with a rugged 81 hp four cylinder fuel efficient engine and is available with cab or ROPS frame.

Our 8000 Series also offers new features like a synchromesh transmission with 14 forward and 4 reverse speeds. An improved turning radius provides even greater maneuverability making the 8000 Series a welcome addition to any farm.

Our new generation of tractors shows how easy improving on affordability can be. When you're the company that sets the affordability standard that is. With our new features and design plus our ease of maintenance you've got the tractor that see you through a full day's work.

Belarus

YES!

The WOOD MASTER
Hot Water Outdoor Wood Furnace
Hot Air

ROSENBERY STOVES
(717) 532-9023

THINKING OF BUILDING?

READ LANCASTER FARMING'S ADVERTISING TO FIND ALL YOUR NEEDS!

MARYLAND

SCHROCK FARM EQUIPMENT
Route 1, Box 2568
Oakland, MD
301-334-9060

D. W. OGG
5149 Cap Stine Rd.
Frederick, MD
301-473-4250

961 Leister's Church Rd.
Westminster, MD
410-848-4585

PENNSYLVANIA

ROVENDALE AG & BARN EQUIPMENT
RD 2, Box 210
Watsonstown, PA
717-538-9564

LUBINIECKI WELDING & EQUIPMENT
RD 2, Box 160
Meadville, PA
814-336-3553

CRAFT-BILT
CONSTRUCTION, INC.
MANHEIM, PA
(717) 653-4023

Pre-Engineered Buildings
Lifetime Design Warranty

Dairy Self-Storage **LESTER** Equine Commercial

NEED YOUR FARM BUILDINGS PAINTED?

Let us give you a price!
Write:
Daniel's Painting
637-A Georgetown Rd.
Ronks, PA 17572
(or leave message)
(717) 687-8262
Spray on and Brush in Painting