



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

NATIONAL BLUEBERRY MONTH  
JULY 2003

---

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

---

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS blueberries are a native North American fruit produced in 35 States;

WHEREAS the pioneering work conducted in New Jersey by Elizabeth White and Dr. Frederick Coville in the early 1900's to domesticate wild highbush blueberries resulted in the development of the hybrid for cultivated highbush blueberries;

WHEREAS from these early efforts, highbush blueberry production has become an important U.S. agricultural industry, with a harvested area now estimated at more than 46,000 acres;

WHEREAS highbush blueberry production in the United States has increased over the last two decades by 65 percent to reach a harvest of 188.8 million pounds in 2002;

WHEREAS more than 55 percent of the 2002 crop was packaged fresh to meet the demands of consumers wanting the most plump and delicious highbush blueberries possible, and the balance was shipped frozen, canned, or dried so that U.S.—grown highbush blueberries can be enjoyed any time of the year by households throughout the world;

WHEREAS blueberries are packed with nutritional benefits, low in calories and fat and a good source of fiber, ranked high in disease-fighting antioxidants, and their consumption contributes to achieving the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendation to choose a diet with plenty of fruit;

WHEREAS highbush blueberries are harvested from mid-April through early October with the harvest reaching its peak in July.

NOW, THEREFORE, to promote the greater appreciation and use of highbush blueberries, I, Ann M. Veneman, Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of July 2003 as "National Blueberry Month" and call upon all citizens to recognize and celebrate the highbush blueberry with appropriate ceremonies and activities;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of April 2003, the two hundred twenty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States of America.

ANN M. VENEMAN  
Secretary