



NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

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To: Terry Bane- Branch Chief, USDA AMS F&V Processed Products
From: Mark Villata- NABC Executive Director
Date: August 22, 2008
Re: **Frozen Blueberry Standards Update**

Dear Mr. Bane,

At recent meetings our industry has discussed the import of "wild" berries identified as blueberries and sold to consumers in the past that may in fact be a wild berry more related to a lignonberry than our domestic blueberry. Based on this issue, the North American Blueberry Council (NABC), a voluntary association representing cultivated blueberry growers from throughout the United States and British Columbia, would like the USDA to look at the current U.S. frozen blueberry standards and see if the standard could be narrowed so that only North and South American blueberries (or other foreign produced blueberries with North American heritage) are identified as a blueberry.

We believe that we may be able to narrow the existing frozen grade standard by rewriting the product description section as detailed below and we are asking your assistance in taking the needed steps to put this proposed revision in place.

The original definition as detailed in the *U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Blueberries* (effective May 22, 1957) Section 52.611 *Product Description* and Section 52.612 *Types of Frozen Blueberries* states:

CURRENT DEFINITION:

Section 52.611 Product Description

Frozen blueberries are prepared from sound, properly ripened fresh fruit of the blueberry bush (Genus *Vaccinium*), including species or varieties often called huckleberries, but not of the Genus *Gaylussacia*; are cleaned and stemmed; are properly washed; are packed with or without packing media; and are frozen and maintained at temperatures necessary for the preservation of the product.

Section 52.612 Types of Frozen Blueberries

- (a) Native or Wild Type
- (b) Cultivated Type

To more narrowly define blueberry and to address our concern we believe that Section 52.611 of the U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Blueberries should be modified to read as follows (Modifications in bold italic type, note no modifications would be made to Section 52.612):

PROPOSED UPDATED DEFINITION:

Section 52.611 Product Description

Frozen blueberries are prepared from sound, properly ripened fresh fruit of the species *Vaccinium corymbosum*, *V. virgatum* (syn. *V. ashei*), *V. angustifolium*, and *V. myrtilloides* (some common names: highbush, cultivated, wild, lowbush, southern highbush, rabbiteye), including species and cultivars often called huckleberries, but not of the genus *Gaylussacia*, are cleaned and stemmed; are properly washed; are packed with or without packing media; and are frozen and maintained at temperatures necessary for the preservation of the product.

Section 52.612 Types of Frozen Blueberries

- (a) Native or Wild Type
- (b) Cultivated Type

I would greatly appreciate your suggestions on the next step we will need to take to make this revision. Please feel free to contact me at any time at (916) 983-2279 and thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Mark Villata
NABC Executive Director