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WILD BLUEBERRY ASSOCIATION TRIGGERING NEW GROWTH AND AWARENESS OF FROZEN FRUIT CATEGORY WITH MULTI-YEAR FROZEN WILD BLUEBERRY CAMPAIGN

Campaign reports significant progress in consumer awareness efforts at mid-year 2010 mark

Portland, ME – Frozen Wild Blueberries are injecting new vitality into supermarkets' frozen food aisles while growing awareness of the frozen fruit category as a whole – and just in time to meet growing consumer demand for year-round, healthy alternatives. The Maine-based Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA) has announced it is committing a record amount of resources in a major, nationally focused, multi-year campaign to significantly grow presence of frozen Wild Blueberries throughout the retail sector. In so doing, Wild Blueberry farms and the strength of the industry will be much more than maintained; rather, a fundamental new, robust growth of frozen fruit overall is expected to occur over the next five years, with frozen Wild Blueberries leading the charge.

WBANA's (www.wildblueberries.com) bold campaign is noteworthy in that when nearing the mid-year 2010 mark, it already has played a lead role in actively transforming how consumers view the frozen fruit aisle in their local markets. "More and more people are acknowledging that they need to have healthier diets, and not just during certain times of the year – that's the key," according to John Sauve, managing partner with Swardlick Marketing Group, WBANA's agency of record. "Our campaign is energizing and reshaping how shoppers regard the frozen fruit aisle as a regularly visited, 'go-to' resource, and how frozen fruit is both viewed and used at home. We're convinced that American consumers are open to this new direction, given shoppers' growing health-consciousness and their increasing support of sustainable agriculture. Both are making for an incredibly promising dynamic."

"Now and in the days ahead, frozen fruit will increasingly be a solution people will look toward when increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables," agreed Elizabeth Pivonka, PhD, RD, and president and CEO of the Produce for Better Health Foundation. "People want to eat healthy meals and snacks, and want access to fruits and vegetables year-round. Frozen fruits, such as frozen wild blueberries, meet the needs of busy consumers, both because of convenience and year-round availability. They're also healthy foods that taste great. All forms of fruits and vegetables count toward meeting daily fruit and vegetable consumption goals. That's the basis of our Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® campaign."



www.wildblueberries.com

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The health benefits and flavor appeal of Wild Blueberries, as opposed to their cultivated counterparts, have taken center stage of late, in no small measure due to enthusiastic coverage earned from national outlets as far-ranging as CBS News, Yahoo! Health and *The New York Times Magazine*.

Regarded as one of nature's ultimate anti-aging foods, the pearl-sized berries may guard against cell damage and the effects of aging for both men and women. Potential health benefits may also include prevention of memory loss and improved motor skills.

Wild Blueberries have been found to have a higher level of antioxidants than almost any other fruit by USDA research findings and such respected outlets as the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry*. *Health* magazine editors earlier this year placed Wild Blueberries high on its list of "America's Healthiest Superfoods for Women," and pointed readers to their supermarkets' frozen fruit aisle for the healthy frozen berries available throughout the year.

The growing appreciation of Wild Blueberries' enormous health benefits already has begun to wake up demand for the frozen variety, and with good reason, according to world-renowned nutrition authority Dr. Steven Pratt, M.D., senior staff ophthalmologist at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, California, and author of the best-selling "SuperFoods Rx" book series. "As people learn they need to eat more fruits every day, and as they realize the very real health benefits and appealing flavor of Wild Blueberries, it only makes sense that year-round demand for the frozen variety will thrive in the years ahead," he noted.

While attention about Wild Blueberries' health benefits has helped spread word of the berries' appeal, it is maximizing the benefits of the frozen variety that is proving a critical move, according to Sauve. No other organization or brand has tackled such a defining undertaking with regard to moving the entire frozen fruit market in terms of volume.

"From a business perspective, WBANA is addressing frozen fruit in the context of investing significant funds and resources to fundamentally build the category as a whole," Sauve noted. "What makes our ongoing campaign so one-of-a-kind is that we believe WBANA will be able to make frozen fruit come alive, with a distinctly new energy and vitality, and with frozen Wild Blueberries leading the effort."

A central component of the WBANA frozen campaign continues to be educating consumers about the draw of frozen Wild Blueberries' flavor, texture, and convenience, coupled with highlighting the marked differences between Wild Blueberries and the cultivated variety. Wild Blueberries are smaller than cultivated, have a more intense flavor, freeze superbly, and retain their important nutritional benefits. With the growth of the frozen Wild Blueberry market, consumers will increasingly be able to enjoy – and benefit from – Wild Blueberries each month of the year, but without sacrificing flavor, texture, or nutrition.

The multi-pronged WBANA campaign focuses on several complementary areas including strategic messaging and advertising, health-related alliances, public relations and social media, and national trade show presence.

On the advertising front, a coordinated national and regional campaign rolled out this spring, including a 30-day April-May nytimes.com run; an April 18 *New York Times Magazine* presence; and strategic buys throughout the spring in *Health* magazine and *Real Age*, as well as on epicurious.com.

WBANA also will be playing an active role at numerous trade shows and industry events this year, ranging from Food Marketing Institute 2010 to the 2010 American Dietetic Association Food & Nutrition Conference and the Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting + Food Expo.

On the social media front, the association recently launched its facebook (www.facebook.com/wildblueberries) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/WildBBerries4U) presence, and is growing its popular "Wild About Health" blog (www.wildblueberryhealthblog.com).

Further, in a productive promotion alliance, WBANA has partnered with a variety of food and industry organizations in the health food arena. One example is the association's alignment with the Produce for Better Health Foundation in support of its Fruits & Veggies—More Matters national public health initiative (<http://tinyurl.com/6mggqe>). The initiative, which seeks to educate Americans that all forms of fruits and veggies – frozen, fresh, canned, 100 percent juice and dried – count toward meeting daily fruit and vegetable consumption goals, is running national public service announcements promoting frozen Wild Blueberries.

WBANA also is sponsoring, alongside the California Walnut Commission, this June's "Food for Your Whole Life Health Symposium 2010" (<http://tinyurl.com/yblcgjib>). Additionally, WBANA serves on the Board of Directors of such health and nutrition-minded organizations as the Produce for Better Health Foundation.

"In the first half of 2010 alone, we're already seeing tremendous progress made in terms of product awareness and moving shoppers to the frozen fruit aisle," Sauve added. "It will be continuing to actively build that awareness among consumer and industry bases that will make all the difference in terms of frozen Wild Blueberries reaching their full throughout the marketplace."

Related Resources:

Recipe for "Wild Blueberry Smoothie"

6 oz frozen Wild Blueberries

6 oz vanilla, blueberry or plain yogurt

1 tablespoon honey (if plain yogurt is used)

½ cup ice (3 ice cubes)

Blend well at high speed. Serve immediately. (Serves 2)



Wild Blueberry Association of North America

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America is a trade association of growers and processors of Wild Blueberries from Maine and Canada, 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 recent news, recipes, and related health information about Wild Blueberries, visit www.wildblueberries.com, and follow www.facebook.com/wildblueberries and www.twitter.com/WildBBerries4U.

WBANA's "Wild About Health" blog can be accessed at www.wildblueberryhealthblog.com.

For related press releases, headlines, and downloadable images, visit www.frontburnerpr.com/wildblueberries.

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