

Learn while you listen: US Highbush Blueberry Council Podcasts make it easy to stay informed

Helen Newman, Berry Industry Development Officer, Agricultural Produce Commission (WA)

The US Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) is a grower-driven organisation that aims to grow consumer demand for blueberries by uniting industry stakeholders through research, promotions and resources.

To support this, they have an impressive arsenal of online resources for growers, marketers, exporters, food and health professionals, and consumers that are worth delving into.

USHBC operations are industry-funded by an assessment (levy) of \$18 per ton collected on highbush blueberries produced in and imported into the United States. The assessment is paid by producers and importers of 2,000 or more pounds of blueberries annually.

For growers, they have a data insights centre which features:

- US production and market information including sales reports, pricing trends, and consumer insights;
- promotional toolkits and marketing materials with free content to promote blueberries to a variety of audiences;
- updates and links to what's happening at their smart farm network;
- and a weekly blog called 'Behind the Blue'.

They also have a weekly podcast called 'The Business of Blueberries'. These podcasts feature conversations with leading voices in the blueberry industry on markets, research, and technology related to blueberry production.

Each episode features voices of US growers and industry stakeholders giving a crop report, updating on crop progress, harvest expectations and market conditions. Collaboration at its best!



If you like listening to insights from other growers delivered in an informal conversational format it is really worth subscribing to *The Business of Blueberries* podcast.



What is a Podcast?

A podcast is essentially a 'talk radio' series on demand. This means that listeners don't need to turn up and tune in live, but can listen any time (and pretty much anywhere) they like. Podcasts tend to be focused on a theme or topic. There are a range of online channels where you can subscribe and listen to podcasts.

How can you access these podcasts?

Each episode of the podcast can be accessed via a number of commonly used Podcast platforms:



If you are not a frequent podcast listener or have never used one of these apps before then the easiest way to listen is using your internet browser. Open a new browser window, visit ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast and click on the latest episode – make sure your sound is turned up!

Here are a few past episodes that are worth a listen when you subscribe



Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/tech-tour-highlights

Tech Tour Highlights (Season 2, Episode 17, October 2021)

Hear a recap of the Tech Tour that took place as part of Innovate 2021.

In this episode, you'll hear from:

- Josh Dietrich, farm manager at PanAmerican Berry Growers, talking about their cooling system that helped save their crop during the Pacific Northwest heat wave.
- Dr. Bernadine Strik, professor of horticulture and a berry crop specialist at Oregon State University, demonstrating research on mulch and fertilization in organic blueberries.
- Jim Hoffman of Hopville Farms speaking about the energy savings of Monarch Tractors.
- George Kaufman, an agronomist at Agricare, introducing a pollinator habitat project implemented at Halls Ferry Farm.
- Steve Erickson, president and CEO at PanAmerican Berry Growers, speaking about the value of collaboration to keep bringing new innovations to the table.

You can also watch virtual Tech Tour videos – visit

<https://ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/tech-tour-highlights>



You Better BEE-Lieve It: Tech and Bees Can Go Together (Season 2, Episode 33, February 2022)

Ellie Symes, CEO of The Bee Corp, and Luis De La Garza, general manager of Royal Oaks Farms, discusses technology that helps beekeepers maximize pollination revenue per hive, and aids growers in reducing costs and optimizing pollination quality.

Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/you-better-bee-lieve-it-tech-and-bees-can-go-together



Driving the Forward Momentum in the Blueberry Industry with Soren Bjorn (Season 2, Episode 36, March 2022)

Host Kasey Cronquist is joined by Soren Bjorn, president of Driscoll's of the Americas, for a wide-ranging conversation about the future of the blueberry industry.

This episode is part one of a two-part interview and looks at: lessons the blueberry industry can take away from the pandemic; Bjorn's thoughts on the future of the industry and making blueberries the world's favorite fruit; the current state of labor in agriculture, and Driscoll's new documentary titled "The Last Harvest"; and Driscoll's recent investment in vertical farming.

Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/driving-the-forward-momentum-in-the-blueberry-industry-with-soren-bjorn



Elevating the Consumer Experience with Soren Bjorn (Season 2, Episode 37, March 2022)

This episode is part two of a two-part interview, with discussion on: improving the sometimes "uneven" consumer experience of blueberries; the importance of improving blueberry genetics and the places where blueberries might grow in the future; the success of the Driscoll's "Sweetest Batch" line, and how it creates an elevated experience for consumers; and how accuracy of blueberry data can help the whole industry.

Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/elevating-the-consumer-experience-with-soren-bjorn



Bee Aware of New Pollination Technology (Season 2, Episode 44, April 2022)

Hear from Itai Kanot, COO and co-founder of BeeHero. Kanot is the son of the largest commercial beekeeper in Israel, and that background ultimately led him to co-found BeeHero in 2017.

He shares about bee health, pollination and how technology can help improve blueberry production.

Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/bee-aware-of-new-pollination-technology



Bird management with Larry Bodtke and Catherine Lindell, Ph.D. (Season 2, Episode 54, July 2022)

Host Kasey Cronquist is joined by Catherine Lindell, Ph.D., Associate Professor at the Centre for Integrative Biology where she also serves as Graduate Program Director.

Alongside her research team, she combines theoretical and applied approaches to the study of the behaviour and ecology of birds and the roles of birds in ecological functions and ecosystem services.

They are both joined by Larry Bodtke, blueberry grower and partner at Cornerstone Ag to discuss the producer's perspective on bird abatement and new approaches and technologies that can deter bird encroachment on blueberry fields.

Listen to this podcast here:

ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast/bird-management-with-larry-bodtke-and-catherine-lindell-ph-d

Links

Visit the USHBC website ushbc.blueberry.org

Subscribe to the weekly Blog "Behind the Blue" at ushbc.blueberry.org/subscribe

Catch the latest Business of Blueberries podcast at ushbc.blueberry.org/podcast

Thank you to WA Berry Industry Development Officer Helen Newman for compiling this article.