Berry Basket Marketing Campaign: Breaking new ground for berries

The project 'MT23500 FY24 Berry Basket Marketing Campaign' is funded by industry levies through Hort Innovation and contributions from the Australian Blueberry Growers Association voluntary levy.

Jane Richter, Communication Manager, Berries Australia

- Delivered through Hort Innovation and led by Berries Australia, this project has seen an industry-first collaboration between blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries all promoted under a 'berry basket' banner
- Three bursts of promotional activity have now been completed, each timed to coincide with peak supply periods across each crop

The final burst of promotional activity took place across December 2024 and January 2025, with an upweight of dedicated Rubus support thanks to a final contribution from the Raspberry and Blackberry Marketing Levy Fund. The additional Rubus investment was channelled exclusively into a social media campaign to achieve the most cost-effective reach against the target audience in the key supply period before Christmas and across January.

The television advert ran again across January on the Broadcast Video on Demand catch-up TV channels like 7 Plus, 9NOW, 10play, and SBS On Demand as well as Kayo Sports and Optus Sport. This was enhanced by a final series of outdoor digital billboard advertising featuring the berry basket campaign creative positioned close to major grocery stores to remind consumers about the berry category on their way into the shop.

The final report from our media agency, Wavemaker, shows clearly that we have exceeded all of the major key performance indicators (KPI) that we set out at the beginning of the campaign. But has the investment been worthwhile?

At its most basic level, the point of consumer marketing is to connect products with potential buyers by creating awareness, interest, and desire. Marketing activities aim to inform consumers about what is available, why they

need it, and how it can improve their lives, ultimately encouraging them to make a purchase. Effective marketing strives to ensure that the right message reaches the right audience at the right time, helping products to build relationships, trust, and loyalty with their customers while driving sales and growth.

The KPIs that we are able to measure help us to understand who we reached with our messaging and how frequently. It gives us a yardstick to evaluate how effective the allocation of our media spend was, but it alone cannot give an indication of the impact of our investment. For this we need to look at consumer behavioural data that tells us if consumers are changing their shopping patterns over the longer term. In the Summer edition I shared the latest consumer indicator data from the Harvest to Home portal (www.harvesttohome.net.au), a project funded by Hort Innovation, using the Australian Horticulture research and development levies, and contributions from the Australian Government. All the key indicators of consumer behaviour were increasing showing that existing buyers who buy berries are buying berries more often when they are shopping for groceries. The next data release is due at the end of March 2025 and we will be looking closely at how the trends are tracking.

In this final report from the industry-first collaborative marketing campaign it is worth revisiting the key reasons why joining forces is a 'no-brainer'. There are six major reasons supporting a joint approach:

1. **Health Halo Effect:** Promoting all berries together reinforces their shared health benefits, like antioxidants, vitamins, and fibre
2. **Increased Consumption:** Showing variety encourages shoppers to buy more than one type of berry at a time, driving up overall category sales
3. **Cross-Promotion:** When berries are marketed as a mix, it boosts awareness and sales for less well-known berries alongside favourites like strawberries and lifts total category sales
4. **Seasonal Appeal:** Promoting all berries together encourages shoppers to shop for berries all year round based on which berries are currently in season
5. **Recipe Inspiration:** Showing mixed berries in simple recipe ideas like smoothies, desserts, or salads inspires consumers to use multiple berry types together, increasing basket size and reflecting the way that consumers tend to eat
6. **Efficient Marketing Spend:** Instead of separate campaigns, a unified berry message stretches the budget further while creating a stronger impact

The competition for consumer purchase choices is not one berry versus another, it is a wide range of products that can fulfill the same need, usage occasion or recipe inclusion as berries. Consumer decision making is a highly individual and complex process and the industry's best chance of long-term success comes from working collaboratively to increase the entire berry category across the whole year.

Next steps

The Berries Australia board has been provided with the final report from the Berry Basket Marketing Campaign and is looking at a range of options to continue this joint approach. The key challenge is the funding model which needs to be fair, equitable between crops and sustainable for the industry to pursue in the longer term to fully reap the benefits of marketing investment. Given that there is no statutory marketing levy in place in any of the crops, an innovative approach is going to be required, but the benefits are there for the taking.

New Berries Australia board director, Nathan Baronio is now taking the lead and will be chairing the Marketing Sub-Committee. New members of any of the committees are always welcome so if you are interested, please get in touch with Rachel Mackenzie rachelmackenzie@berries.net.au