



**Promotion Committee Meeting**  
**Friday, March 1, 2024**  
**10 - 11:30 a.m. MT**  
**El Conquistador Tucson Hotel**  
**10000 North Oracle Road, Tucson, AZ 85704**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83925201661>

**Committee Members**

<b>Brian Bocock, Chair</b>	Doug LaCroix
Nathan Sakuma, V. Chair	Bonnie Lundblad
Alec Arena	Jeff Malensky
Ray Biln	Amy Nguyen
Daniel Bustamante	Kyla Oberman
Katelyn Craig	Steve Philips
Gonzalo de Elizalde	Doug Rombach
Chad Don	Felipe Silva
Juan Flores	Darren Sinn

Joe Barsi – HR Advisory Board Liaison  
Mario Flores – GB Advisory Board Liaison

USHBC Board Chair - Shelly Hartmann (ex-officio)

**AGENDA**

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Call to Order/ Roll Call                             | Brian Bocock   |
| 2. Chair Welcome & Meeting Purpose                      | Brian Bocock   |
| 3. Special Presentation                                 | Brian Bocock   |
| 4. Consent Agenda Approval                              | Brian Bocock   |
| a. Agenda   |                |
| b. Approval of Minutes                                  |                |
| c. 2023 Program Reports                                 |                |
| 5. Vice President's Report                              | Kevin Hamilton |
| a. High Level/Notable 2023 Activities Recap             |                |
| b. Start/Stop/Continue POV from 2023                    |                |
| 6. 2024 Program Updates                                 |                |
| a. Overview of Budget Cuts and Impact for 2024 Programs | Kevin Hamilton |

- b. 2024 Notable Tactics/Activities Kevin Hamilton
  - c. Initial Activities in 2024 for 2025+ Kevin Hamilton
  - d. PR Kristy Babb
  - e. Health & Nutrition Affairs Platforms Dr. Leslie Wada
  - f. Q&A
- 7. Other Business Brian Bocock
  - 8. Final Q&A Brian Bocock
  - 9. Next Meeting Schedules Brian Bocock
  - 10. Adjourn

## AGENDA ITEM #4

### Consent Agenda Approval

- Agenda
- Minutes
- 2023 Program Reports



**Promotion Committee**

**Friday, September 29, 2023**

**10-11:30 a.m. ET**

**The DeSoto**

**15 East Liberty Street**

**Savannah, GA 31401**

**Jeff Malensky, chair, presiding**

**MINUTES**

**Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Malensky at 10:01 a.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023.

**Committee Members Present:** Jeff Malensky, Brian Bocock, Alec Arena, Bob Carini, Katelyn Craig, Gonzalo de Elizalde, Juan Flores, Mario Flores, Janice Honigberg, Doug LaCroix, Amy Nguyen, Kyla Oberman, Steve Philips, Doug Rombach, Nathan Sakuma, Felipe Silva, GBAB Liaison Mario Flores and USHBC Council Chair Shelly Hartmann

**Committee Members Absent:** Ray Biln and Daniel Bustamante

QUORUM PRESENT

**USDA/AMS Representative:** Jeanette Palmer and Andrew Charles

**Guests Present:** Michelle Amoroso of Padilla; Amy Shipley of SRG; Don Ladhoff of Fresh Smart Solutions

**Staff Members Present:** Kasey Cronquist, Kevin Hamilton, Julie Fogarty, Renata Dalton, Leslie Wada, Ross Peterson and Melinda Kern

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

**ACTION 1:** Motion made by Gonzalo de Elizalde to approve the consent agenda for September 29, 2023.

Motion seconded by Brian Bocock.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **President's report**

Jeff Malensky and Kasey Cronquist welcomed Kevin Hamilton, Vice President of Global Marketing and Communications, and reported on the committee's meeting in Dallas, Texas, at the offices of Avocados from Mexico. The meeting provided time for discussion of how to drive profitable demand as an industry.

Cronquist mentioned the surprise season results in Peru and the effects on USHBC program budgets due to the pending assessment dollar reduction.

Cronquist requested participation in the Industry Benchmark Survey, which shapes planning for 2024 and beyond, and announced The 2024 Blueberry Convention will be held in Tucson, Arizona.

## **2024 Plan Recommendations**

Malensky reported on the reallocation of funds for the 2024 budget, new program alignment with Health Research and Nutrition and Global Business, and the continued key role of the Grab a Boost of Blue program.

## **2024 Promotion and Marketing Program Overview**

Kevin Hamilton shared his work experience and background in the ag industry and marketing. Hamilton provided his thoughts on the 2024 USHBC promotion and marketing program, including the need to address industry supply and pricing, and the natural economic baseline implications that follow. Hamilton shared a visual presentation on multi-track approaches in advertising, marketing and branding. Hamilton included his intention to create more efficiency and opportunity within the budget, particularly related to moving from agency work to staff.

## **Health and Nutrition**

Leslie Wada, Ph.D., presented on the 2023 Health and Nutrition Advisory Board active grants and recently funded studies, which focus on flavonoids, hearing and hearing loss, muscle loss and learning memory in children. Wada highlighted educational webinars and a 2024 focus on brain health, healthy living, gut health and cardiovascular health. Efforts to seek a berry subgroup in the US dietary guidelines continue, as does research related to the U.S. Pointer Study, "food as medicine" and MIND diet.

Wada shared the grant program process for 2024 letters of intent and requests for proposals.

## **Global Business Development Update**

Renata Dalton reported the 20% tariff reduction in India.

Dalton highlighted other key recent events: the Philippines' reverse trade missions to Oregon and Washington, and participation in 2023 Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong, which was well-attended. Dalton also reviewed the 2024 export marketing promotions budget that includes grant revenue, grant expenses and the global food manufacturing program.

**Consumer, Health and Retail**

Michelle Amoroso of Padilla presented 2023 highlights in consumer health and retail, and an outlook on 2024 Grab a Boost of Blue efforts to grow profitable demand and increase household penetration. Highlights included: attention to active audiences, value-driven framework, sponsorship packages, lifestyle media efforts, power periods, E-commerce and a consumer and health professional focus.

**Foodservice and Food Ingredient**

Amy Shipley of SRG reported on U.S. restaurant sales and reviewed the foodservice road map.

Shipley also reviewed the 2024 strategic priorities and targets for foodservice, including commercial chains and non-commercial. She noted that the 2023 The Flavor Experience included 400 chains where new ideas for blueberry menus and healthy menu collaborations took place. Shipley also reported on targeted retail, health and retail annual programs.

**2024 Budget Approval & Recommendation to the Council**

Ross Peterson reviewed the 2024 proposed market promotion and publicity budget.

ACTION 2 : Motion made by Amy Nguyen to recommend the 2024 promotion and marketing, health research and global business development plans and budgets to the council for support and approval.

Motion seconded by Felipe Silva.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be at the 2024 Blueberry Convention in Tucson, Arizona.

**Adjournment:**

ACTION 3: Motion made by Bob Carini to adjourn the meeting.

Motion seconded by Doug LaCroix.

Motion carried unanimously; meeting adjourned on September 29, 2023, at 11:45 a.m. ET.



# 2023 USHBC RESULTS

## Consumer, Health Influencers & Retail Results Recap

# 2023 Marketing & Communication Program Conclusions

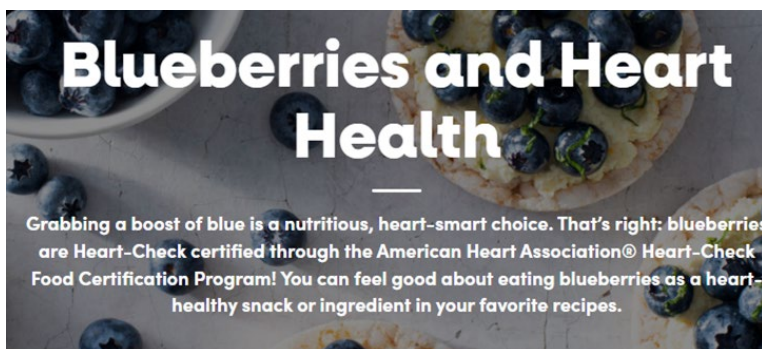
The 2023 consumer, health influencers and retail programs met or exceeded the vast majority of all established goals, with several big wins:

- Moved more than **684K blueberry units** and **\$3.85M in sales** during the campaign period while digital advertising ran on retail channels (**Instacart, Fetch**) with a **spend of \$256,071.07**.
- Generated a voice of more than **1 billion impressions** in media coverage with more than **16 million engagements**.
- Nurtured blueberries' relationship with our community of 50,000+ superfans, delivering newsletters better tailored to their needs, spurring email clicks to a **145% increase** vs. 2022.
- Greater focus on search engine optimization helped generate a **26% increase** in exposure vs. 2022, with blueberry.org reaching **1.3 million views**, 846 keywords in the top 1 to 3 positions of Google search results and 11.6K ranking keywords in total.

# Power Periods



# Healthy Heart, Happy Heart



Highlighted the role blueberries can play as part of a heart-healthy diet and lifestyle with new recipes and nutrition information for heart-health minded consumers.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Heart Health landing page, interactive quiz and blog
- Heart Health toolkit
- Blue Crew content promotions
- SmartBrief e-newsletter, ads; WebMD e-newsletter
- AHA recipe certification
- Produce for Better Health Foundation recipe and e-newsletter feature
- Industry e-newsletter features
- Press release on USHBC newsrooms
- Media outreach via Blue Crew and RDs

## TOP RESULTS:

- WebMD dedicated send delivered to 86K+ consumers with an open rate of 54.81%, exceeding average benchmarks
- Mascha Davis' Instagram post was the top-performing Blue Crew Instagram promotion with a voice of 4.3K
- The heart-healthy quiz was the top link clicked in the SmartBrief and WebMD e-newsletters
- Earned coverage of USHBC funded studies in *Eat This, Not That!* and *Clean Plates* (both placements included direct links to USHBC health and consumer sites)
- The heart health landing page was the 2nd most visited page on Blueberry.org in February and the heart health consumer tip sheet was #1 for engagement, with 34% (245) of total downloads, in February



## WHICH GENERATED:

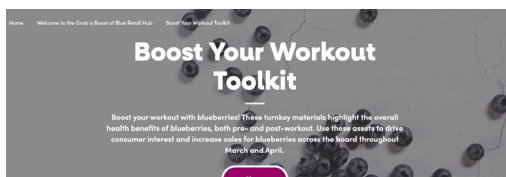
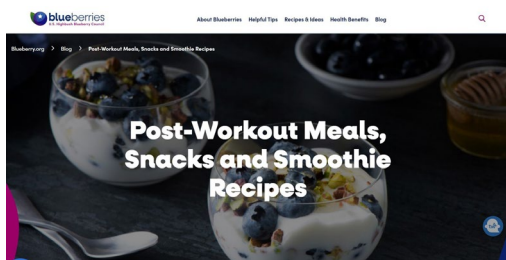
- Voice: 16,720,665
- Reach: 8,518,776
- Engagement: 11,406,934

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Amplification of blueberry health and nutrition content tied to American Heart Month
- Knowledge on how to apply blueberry health and nutrition recommendations

# Boost Your Workout



USHBC's first ever Boost Your Workout power period ran from March through April of 2023 and leveraged USHBC funded research to share the various ways people can use blueberries in their day-to-day routine, as the perfect workout boost to encourage usage and consumption, and to support overall health.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Partnership with Life Time Fitness
- Fitness forward influencer partnerships and Blue Crew promotions
- Workout focused blog posts on Blueberry.org
- Retail promotions on Instacart and Digital-Out-of-Home
- Consumer and industry e-newsletter inclusions
- Boost Your Workout toolkit
- Digital advertising
- Social media promotions

## TOP RESULTS:

- Partnership with Life Time Fitness tapped into their audience of fitness enthusiasts, resulting in a voice of over 3.6M, and with digital ads outperforming Life Time benchmarks by +700K.
- Boost Your Workout consumer blog post was one of the best performing blog posts, with over 9.1K views.
- Resulted in one of the highest click-through rates for an SEM campaign in 2023, at 13.97%.
- Instacart advertising during Boost Your Workout saw over \$990k in sales during the campaign period, with a spend of \$46K.
- Influencer promotion with Peloton Instructor, Ash Pryor, was the top performing promotion in March and April, securing a voice of 46K.
- KPI's for voice, reach and engagement were exceeded for this campaign.



## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 11,606,807
- Reach: 2,208,300
- Engagement: 264,546

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Awareness of how blueberries can play a role in supporting active lifestyles
- Enhanced third-party credibility through fitness experts, partnerships and influencers

# National Blueberry Month



In July, USHBC celebrated National Blueberry Month with The Great Blueberry Recipe Showdown, a recipe contest judged by Milk Bar's Christina Tosi. The contest promoted the versatility of blueberries in a range of delicious applications from breakfast to dessert.

The month-long contest inspired blueberry consumers to grab a bigger boost of blue throughout the month and test their unique blueberry recipes for a chance to travel to NYC and meet Christina Tosi.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Celebrity chef partnership with Christina Tosi
- National blueberry recipe contest
- Digital advertising
- Social media promotions
- Influencer partnerships, Blue Crew promotions
- Refreshed National Blueberry Month Toolkit
- Media relations
- Retail and Industry promotions
- Press release over PRNewswire

## TOP RESULTS:

- The Great Blueberry Recipe Showdown resulted in 620 recipe submissions, 1.3K new subscribers to USHBC's consumer e-newsletter and 23K visits to the contest website.
- Influencer promotions in July from creators like Justine Snacks and Ash Pryor, from Peloton, resulted in over 6.8M engagements.
- Segment with Chef George Duran on Fox & Friends garnered a voice of 1.2M.
- Social and e-newsletter promotions from Christina Tosi's channels resulted in a voice of over 395K.
- Moved 52K units, which drove \$268K in blueberry sales through Instacart, with a \$24K spend.
- KPI's for voice, reach and engagement were exceeded for this campaign.



## WHICH GENERATED:

- Total Voice: 22,950,958
- Total Reach: 14,706,532
- Total Engagements: 8,705,252

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Exposure to National Blueberry Month and inspiration for increased usage of blueberries nationwide

# Healthy Fall Boost



**Grab a Healthy Fall Boost with Blueberries**

Through September and October, this health-centric power period leveraged new back-to-school and fall forward recipes, and new health research to inspire blueberry usage occasions. Partnerships and webinars tailored to retail RDs further amplified timely messaging and fall-forward content to encourage target audiences to get a healthy fall boost of blue.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Digital promotions and Healthy Fall Boost toolkit
- Robust partnerships: MindBodyGreen, Medscape, Produce for Better Health, Recess Therapy
- Media RD webinars and Blue Crew/influencer content partnerships
- New recipes and usage applications for back-to-school and the fall season
- E-commerce promotions
- Social media and media relations
- Paid media
- Retail promotions
- Webinars with Wakefern and the Produce for Better Health Foundation



## TOP RESULTS:

- The custom article with MindBodyGreen received over 25K pageviews, outperforming the custom article from the previous year by 5K.
- Medscape eblast was sent to over 11,500 physicians, achieving 116% of our send goal.
- Media RD Malina Malkani's Instagram post was the top performing promotion with a voice of 10.2K.
- Dedicated flavonoid study e-blast sent to 537 HPs resulted in our highest HP database open rate to date (27.3%).
- The Health Pro Tip Sheet was #1 for engagement, with 53% (9) of total downloads.
- Webinars, with over 280 combined RD and influencer participants, showcasing USHBC research resulted in a voice of over 700K.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 12,151,941
- Reach: 4,717,458
- Engagement: 323,576

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*



## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Amplification of blueberry health and nutrition content tied to a healthy fall routine
- Excitement around blueberry usage and consumption during the back-to-school season
- Awareness for new blueberry research

# Winter Holiday Boost

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 166,467,357
- Reach: 57,958,971
- Engagement: 3,963,046

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

Hallmark Channel with Blueberries.  
Posted by Sprout Social  
Paid Partnership - 

Elevate your next holiday party with the Blueberry Gingerbread Layer Cake plus 9 more blueberry recipes to highlight this versatile berry at your "Checkin' It Twice" watch party tonight at 8/7c. Sponsored by Blueberries.

<https://www.hallmarkchannel.com/christmas/10-blueberry-recipes-for-a-berry-cozy-season>



The power period focused on inspiring blueberry usage and encouraging target audiences to grab a boost of blue during the holidays by driving them to new holiday recipe content on Blueberry.org. Partnership with Hallmark, which included a holiday recipe listicle in partnership and promotion of Hallmark's Very Merry Giveaway, encouraged blueberry lovers to celebrate all season long.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Partnership with the Hallmark Channel in their Very Merry Giveaway Sweepstakes
- Recipe listicle on Hallmark Channel's website
- Influencer partnerships and Blue Crew promotions
- Digital advertising
- Social media promotions
- Consumer e-newsletter and blog content on Blueberry.org
- Homepage callout on Blueberry.org
- Refreshed Holiday Toolkit

## TOP RESULTS:

- The Hallmark x Blueberry Very Merry Giveaway resulted in 3M blueberry prize entries and the blueberry recipe listicle resulted in a voice of 5M.
- The Hallmark x Blueberries blog post on Blueberry.org resulted in 33K views, reaching #1 blog post of the year.
- Received over 60K email opt-ins to USHBC's consumer e-Newsletter through Very Merry Giveaway promotions.
- The Very Merry Giveaway social ad resulted in over 25K link clicks to Blueberry.org
- Justine Snacks' holiday recipe content on Instagram secured an impressive voice of 550K.
- KPI's for voice, reach and engagement were exceeded for this campaign.

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Interest in engaging with blueberries around the holidays, both in the kitchen and online
- Excitement around participating in Hallmark's Very Merry Giveaway for a chance to participate in a blueberry farm getaway
- Increased website traffic and awareness of USHBC's newest holiday recipes and resources



# Program Recaps:

Consumer  
Health Influencers  
Retail



**Consumer**



# Executive Summary: CONSUMER



	Digital Advertising	Social Media	Media Relations
<b>Voice</b> (How loud were we?)	43,240,437	75,659,410	1,007,985,946 75 articles
<b>Reach</b> (How many in our target audience heard us?)	25,056,764	61,008,627	604,791,567
<b>Engagement</b> (How many likely responded to the noise we made?)	8,322,890	10,689,371	16,951,618 6 articles

## TOP TAKEAWAYS

- 2023 advertising honed-in on successful tactics for blueberries by putting more dollars into what we know works. We saw very strong metrics for 2023 with voice (30.65% higher), reach (71.7% higher), and engagement (27.7% higher) surpassing initial projections, even with budget reductions.
- The top performing posts across channels all represented different content pillars, with recipes still #1 overall, followed by lifestyle content. Of note, top recipe posts were complete opposites: one was an indulgent homemade pastry and the other was our healthier Blueberry Ricotta Toast. This shows that our content strategy is continuing to appeal to the diverse interests and lifestyles of our audience. Many of our recent recipes were also top performers and were the best performing boosted posts, which is a key driver of web traffic.
- Blueberry health benefits and health research continue to be significant drivers of top tier national media coverage, with 82% of coverage secured in 2023 having included USHBC health halo messaging. They play an integral part in disseminating USHBC health research and blueberry health facts, with 59% of coverage including specific references to USHBC health research, to consumers through reliable outlets via trusted health influencers like RDs and physicians.

## KEY LEARNINGS

- Consumers loved the content partnership with Recess Therapy, a social campaign featuring a video of kids sharing their love for blueberries for back to school, resulting in a lot of attention and engagement. Our awareness-first video ads drove a 1.3% sales lift over control groups and a 3.1X incremental ROAS, showcasing the impact these tactics have on consumer consumption.
- While “From the Farm” is one of our core content pillars, it continues to be the least engaged with and lowest reaching content on our channels. Until we’re able to leverage stronger owned assets in this category, it’s worth testing a smaller share of content in this category and supplementing by merging key messages where applicable on posts from other pillars.
- Leaning into relationships with and pursuing proactive media opportunities with media RDs is an effective medium to disseminate USHBC research and reach consumers and health influencers by showcasing the diverse benefits of blueberries, while highlighting blueberry usage opportunities and elevating USHBC messaging. Media RD partnerships in 2023 led to securing placements in Forbes Health, Yahoo! and more, and resulted in over 300M impressions.

# Digital Advertising: Consumer

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 43,240,437
- Reach: 25,056,764
- Engagement: 8,322,890

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND DROVE AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Top of mind and top of list awareness before grocery shopping
- Engagement in learning more about blueberries and trying recipes



### KEY TACTICS:

- Paid Search
- Paid Social
- CTV/OTT
- Audio
- Retargeted Display
- Partnership with Recess Therapy

In 2023 we continued the seasonality-first approach updating content often to keep ads fresh and engaging for our target audience.

For the first time, we were able to apply attribution to awareness tactics and saw promising results.

### TOP RESULTS:

- Catalina data allowed us to attribute sales to awareness tactics (Video, Display, Audio). We saw \$623K in incremental sales, a 1.3% sales lift over the Control Group, generating an incremental ROAS of 3.31X.
- Video ads generated 6.18 million completed views with a 98.68% completion rate.
- Audio ads generated 1.27M completed listens with a 98.21% completion rate.
- Display ads generated over 16K clicks to the site with a 0.21% CTR.
- Recess Therapy partnership had outstanding results, with over 1.01M video views and over 111K engagements, with the posts showing the positive sentiment consumers feel about blueberries.
- Google Ads drove over 192.8K clicks to the site and resulted in nearly 200 new newsletter subscribers and over 1K recipe shares, prints, and saves.



# Media Relations

Outreach to nationwide media generated news coverage for blueberries.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM MEDIA COVERAGE IN 2023

- 100% positive sentiment of earned coverage
- 59% included USHBC health-funded research
- 100% included specific key messages (e.g., healthy goodness, everyday snack, simply delicious)
- 12% included USHBC mentions

# 75

**VOLUME**

Total number of placements

# 1B+

**VOICE**

Total number of readership

# 604.7M

**REACH**






Total number of readership in target audience

# 16.9M

**ENGAGEMENT**

Total number of impressions with call to action in article

## TOP FIVE MEDIA PLACEMENTS:

Name of Publication	Date	Voice	Top-Tier Outlet (200K+ Impressions)
Yahoo!	10/31/2023	422,951,989	
Forbes	11/29/2023	72,975,564	
U.S. News	7/12/2023	12,610,000	
Insider	2/16/2023	19,040,000	
Eat This, Not That!	2/3/2023	1,558,986	

# Social Media



Our content strategy continues to appeal to diverse interests of our target audience, as top posts of 2023 represented different content pillars and recipes with different skill levels and usage occasions

## KEY TACTICS:

- Leveraged timely social media trends
- Evolved with platform algorithms changes (e.g. increased prioritization of video content)
- Increased focus on driving awareness within lifestyle space
- Developed content for engaging Instagram/Facebook Stories
- Optimized social advertising

## TOP RESULTS:

- Voice: 109% to goal
- Reach: 104% to goal
- Engagements: 214% to goal

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice (impressions): **75,659,410**
- Reach (varies by channels): **61,008,627**
- Engagement (likes, comments, shares, video views, link clicks): **10,689,371**



## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Blueberry recipe inspiration
- Knowledge of health and nutrition benefits
- Increased engagement through use of video and interactive content

# Influencer Promotions



Influencers helped bring real-life moments into power period content to highlight simple ways to use blueberries in all forms.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Celebrated key blueberry days and power periods to further reach & awareness of key moments
- Utilized influencers for the Boost Your Workout National Blueberry Month, as well as to help gain new recipes for USHBC websites
- Prioritized expanded scopes with influencer partners to increase content frequency and help build brand familiarity and association

## TOP RESULTS:

- Partnering with Justine Snacks proved to be successful once again, her NBM upside down cake garnered 4.6M impressions on IG and 1.4M on TikTok. We also partnered with her for the holiday season to create a holiday Blueberry Eggnog Coffee Cake recipe which garnered over 500K impressions.
- To expand our cocktail recipe collection we partnered with SocialSipper to create a Spiced Blueberry French 75 that performed extremely well, garnering over 82K impressions and 96K engagements.
- We partnered with Peloton Rowing instructor Ash Pryor in 2023 who is known as the "Blueberry Queen" at Peloton studios by her fellow instructors and is the ultimate blueberry fan. This partnership allowed blueberries with a notable brand like Peloton.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice (impressions): 6,917,324
- Reach (varies by channel): 6,736,975
- Engagement (likes, comments, shares, video views, link clicks, etc): 7,893,804



## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Brand awareness & reach into niche audiences  
More followers across USHBC channels
- Engagement & participation in giveaways & social activations



# Blueberry.org (consumer website)



National Blueberry Month 101

Blueberries get a lot of love from fans – but did you know they're recognized by the federal government as well? That's what we call a very official boost of blue!

1974

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives pass a joint resolution recognizing July as "Blueberry Month".

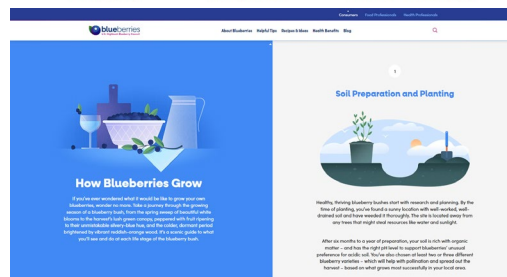
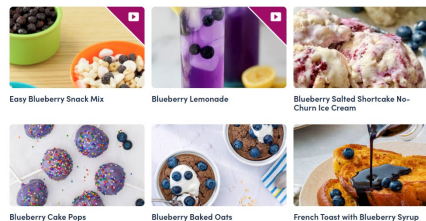
2003

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) further establishes blueberries' place on the calendar, proclaiming July "National Blueberry Month" to "promote the greater appreciation and use of highbush blueberries."

2020

The role of blueberries in American lives is reaffirmed when the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives pass a joint resolution designating July as "National Blueberry Month".

Explore More Blueberry History



More than ever before, consumers nationwide visited USHBC's blueberry-specific website, demonstrating their interest in all the attributes that make blueberries, blueberries – their nutritional benefits, their history, their flavor & versatility, and their year-round availability.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Seasonal updates to promote timely, strategic recipe content
- Ongoing blog development optimized for Google search
- Launch of "How Blueberries Grow," as well as the "Blueberries and Heart Health" and "National Blueberry Month" pages as part of USHBC's power period activations

## TOP RESULTS:

- By year's end, USHBC exceeded its goals for reach and engagement.
- 26% increase in reach year-over-year.
- Best fourth quarter (Q4) of all time with nearly 377,000 in reach, which is 30% higher than the previous record-holder (2021).
- Strongest year ever for the Blog, due in large part to SEO tactics and cross-channel activations (i.e., Google Ads, Pinterest, etc.).
- Thousands of recipe prints, the #1 action on-site, signaling consumers' heightened interest and purchase intent.

## WHICH GENERATED:

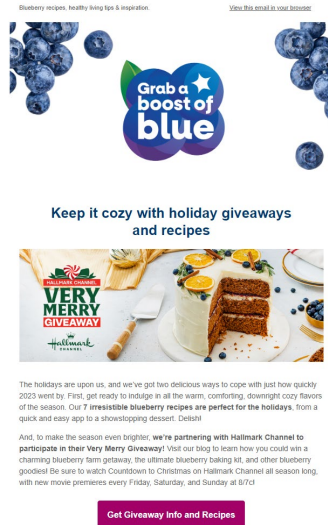
- Reach (pageviews): 1,293,187
- Engagement (total events, goal completions): 35,785

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Awareness of blueberry.org as a go-to resource for ideas, information and trends
- Familiarity with blueberries' origin and attributes
- Inspiration to try blueberries in classic and 'unconventional' dishes



# Email Marketing



Celebrate spring with freshly baked boosts of blue!



Click [here](#) to watch the full video.

Heads up, blueberry fans: **National Blueberry Pie Day is April 28.** As always, if you need inspiration, we've got you covered! Check out our blog for 10 blueberry pie recipes to match any mood, occasion, season or even temperature. That's right – if you're already feeling the heat, we have no-bake boosts of blue!

[Get Blueberry Pie Recipes](#)

USHBC capitalized on its list-building efforts from the previous year, reaching tens of thousands of blueberry lovers each month with content they cared about – informed by subscriber research, online search trends, and our in-house data.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Editorial calendar development based on 2022 audience research, coupled with the latest search trends
- Monthly email distributions featuring curated recipe selections, data-driven blog posts, Power Period calls to action and Blue Crew content
- A/B testing to refine subject lines for increased engagement

## TOP RESULTS:

- 124% increase in voice year-over-year.
- 145% increase in engagement.
- Honed subject lines and overall content strategy, contributing to a 2.47% click rate (a 30% jump compared to 2022 and one of USHBC's best years of all time).
- Generated healthy site traffic; 2-min, 38-sec average time on site.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice (# emails x # subscribers): 817,061
- Engagement (clicks): 35,549

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

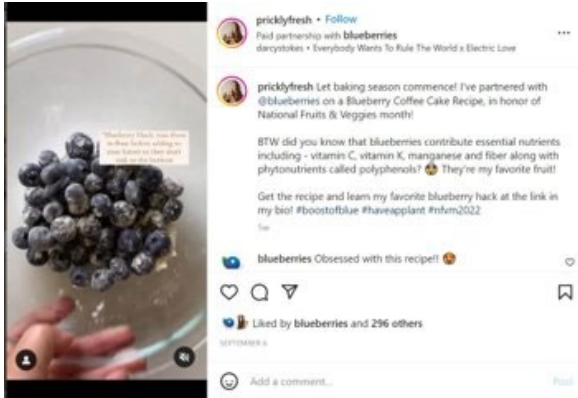
- Desire to buy and use blueberries
- Awareness of USHBC (and blueberry.org) as a go-to resource for ideas, information and trends

# Health Influencers



# Executive Summary: HEALTH INFLUENCERS

## TOP PERFORMING PARTNERSHIPS



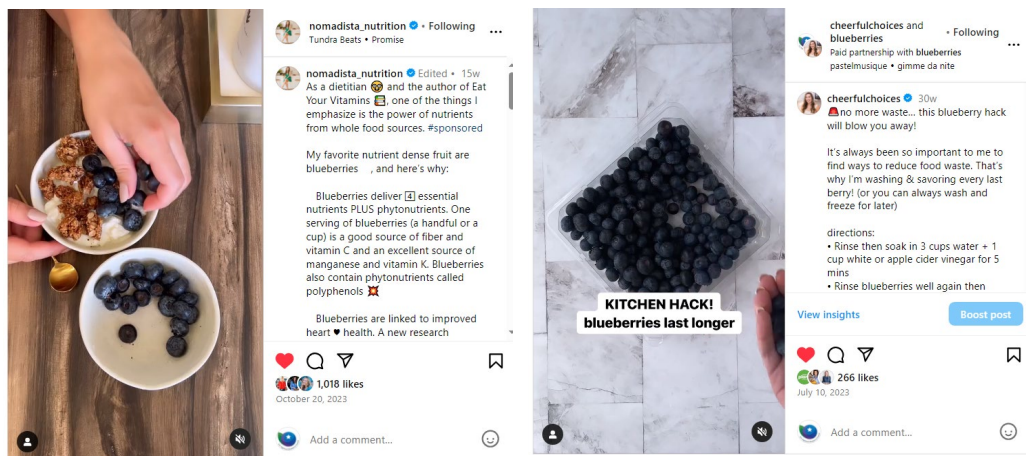
	Blue Crew + Media RDs	Partnerships	Health Pros Site
<b>Voice</b> (How loud were we?)	325,018,070	4,169,154	N/A
<b>Reach</b> (How many in our target audience heard us?)	153,928,204	752,800	15,807
<b>Engagement</b> (How many likely responded to the noise we made?)	15,900,411	18,118	3,115

### TOP TAKEAWAYS

- **Blue Crew Ambassadors & Media RDs:** Surpassed reach and engagement goals set in 2023. Media RDs had one of their most successful years, landing placements highlighting USHBC health research and key messaging in noteworthy publications like *Forbes Health* and *Eat This, Not That*.
- **Partnerships:** Generated strong voice, reach and engagement compared to 2022. Partnerships with MindBodyGreen and Produce for Better Health surpassed metrics secured in 2022, with comparable scopes. Key learnings from partnership content in 2022 effectively informed development of 2023 content to deliver successful results.
- **Health Influencers website** is by far the most impactful in securing material downloads.

### KEY LEARNINGS

# The Blue Crew



Blue Crew activations encouraged consumers to include blueberries in their eating patterns and provided education on their nutrition and health benefits through media placements, social and digital activations.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 81,945
- Reach: 58,977
- Engagement: 6,076

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Trust in blueberry health and nutrition benefits
- Inspiration to enjoy blueberries in new, versatile ways
- Knowledge on how to apply blueberry health and nutrition recommendations

### KEY TACTICS:

- Each Blue Crew member had a specific number of social media and traditional media placements to fulfill as part of their contracts.

### TOP RESULTS:

- Mascha Davis had the top performing posts across all three health power periods, including her post for the Healthy Fall Boost which garnered over 13K impressions.
- Reel/video content was the top performing content from all Blue Crew members, especially tips, health hacks and lifestyle content.
- Blue Crew exceeded reach and engagement goals for 2023.

# Media RDs

**Built positive buzz for the blueberry health halo using credentialed experts that encourage increased consumption.**



**EAT THIS, NOT THAT!**

## Blueberries

“In just [over] 80 calories, a 1-cup serving of blueberries delivers crave-worthy flavor and beneficial vitamins and minerals, including four essential nutrients—vitamin C, vitamin K, manganese, fiber—and phytonutrients,” says Burgess, who is a nutrition partner for the U.S. Highbush Blueberry council.

Recent research shows a link between blueberries and gut health, too. A small 2023 study examining the effect of blueberry consumption on symptoms and quality of life in adults with irritable bowel syndrome or functional dyspepsia found that consuming about 1 ¼ cup of blueberries daily for six weeks relieved abdominal symptoms and other markers of well-being compared to a placebo, notes Burgess. The researchers attributed these benefits to the polyphenols in blueberries, which may have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective properties<sup>[9]</sup>.

The abundant antioxidants in blueberries may also protect brain cells, boost cognitive performance and enhance blood flow for brain and cardiovascular health, adds Julie Pace, a functional dietitian nutritionist based in Mississippi. She recommends adding a cup of these brain-boosting berries to smoothies, a yogurt bowl or as a topping on salads.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Top-tier online media placements
- Social media promotions

## TOP RESULTS:

- Secured coverage in top-tier media outlets, like *Eat This, Not That!*, *Yahoo!*, *EatingWell* and *Forbes*.
- The *Forbes* placement delivered a voice of 72,975,564.
- Voice secured from Media RDs in 2023 far exceeded voice in 2022, by 220M+.



## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 324,936,125
- Reach: 153,869,227
- Engagement: 15,894,335

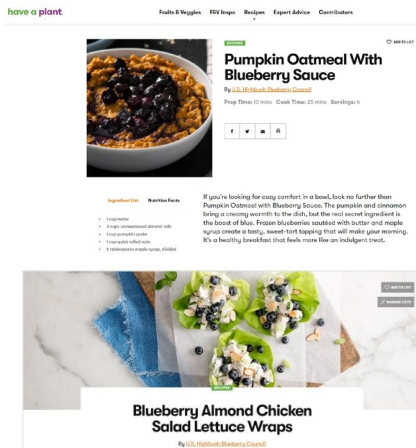
*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Understanding on how to apply blueberry health and nutrition recommendations
- Awareness of new research
- Enhanced third-party credibility via media registered dietitians
- Visibility for the connection between blueberries and various health benefits

# Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) Partnership

Strategic partnership increased visibility for power periods throughout the year, driving reach of messaging.



## KEY TACTICS:

- Activated on PBH Delegate Board Level member benefits including recipe features on Fruitsandveggies.org, social promotions on PBH channels, e-newsletter features, and digital ad placements

## TOP RESULTS:

- Webinar in partnership with PBH, highlighting USHBC research, during the Healthy Fall Boost power period, which included social promotions resulted in a voice of 729K.
- Social promotions during National Blueberry Month rose awareness for the Great Blueberry Recipe Showdown with PBH's audience of health influencers and consumers and resulted in a voice of over 140K, outperforming social promotions with PBH from 2022.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 1,265,102
- Reach: 170,611
- Engagement: 6,215

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

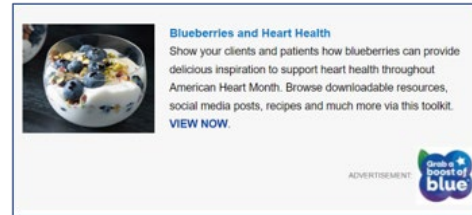
## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Inspiration to incorporate more blueberries in the diet through easy recipes
- Enhanced third-party credibility via PBH across their social network and on Fruitsandveggies.org
- Visibility of power period messaging



# SmartBrief

## Raised awareness for new blueberry research and resources among a health influencer audience.



### KEY TACTICS:

- SmartBrief e-blast and ads for each corresponding health power period, highlighting new research and driving to toolkits.

### TOP RESULTS:

- Helped drive traffic to blueberry.org increasing reach and engagement, particularly toolkit downloads, demonstrating the critical role SmartBrief plays in supporting awareness of the site, site traffic (reach) and downloads (engagements).
- Ad impression and click thru rates were in line with and exceeded SmartBrief industry benchmarks in 2023.

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 755,826
- Reach: 530,090
- Engagement: 18,118

*NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Trust in blueberry health and nutrition benefits
- Interest in incorporating blueberries into eating patterns to support overall health
- Awareness of new research



# MindBodyGreen

Highlighted back-to-school and healthy fall boost with blueberries within a wellness/lifestyle perspective through a custom article spotlighting a popular recipe.

PAID CONTENT FOR 

These Blueberry French Toast Muffins Make The Perfect Back-To-School Breakfast

Written by  
Dyan Brady



Back-to-school eating is all about simple, nutritious staples and easy-to-make recipes. One ingredient that you'll always find in our fridge? [Blueberries](#). To learn more about this delicious nutritional powerhouse and how to incorporate more of it into your family's diet, we chatted with a member of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council's (USHBC) [2023 Blue Crew](#), [Sonali Ruder](#), D.O.—a chef, ER doctor, and proud mom of two.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Custom article featuring a USHBC recipe and quotes from Sonali Rudder
- Instagram stories
- Brand bio page on MindBodyGreen.com



## TOP RESULTS:

- The custom article received over 25K pageviews, outperforming the custom article with MBG in 2022 by 5K pageviews.
- Those who read the content were interested in clicking to the USHBC website to learn more/make the recipe, which resulted in a 0.96% CTR, 433% above MBG's 0.18% benchmark.
- The social media driving to the article garnered a CTR of 0.39%, 116% above MBG's benchmark.
- Overall program voice exceeded MBG benchmarks by nearly 700K.



## WHICH GENERATED:

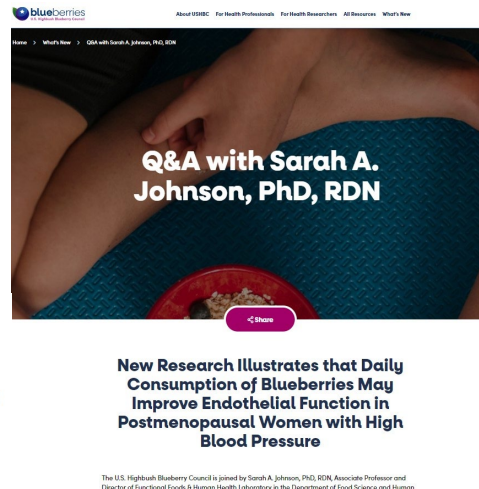
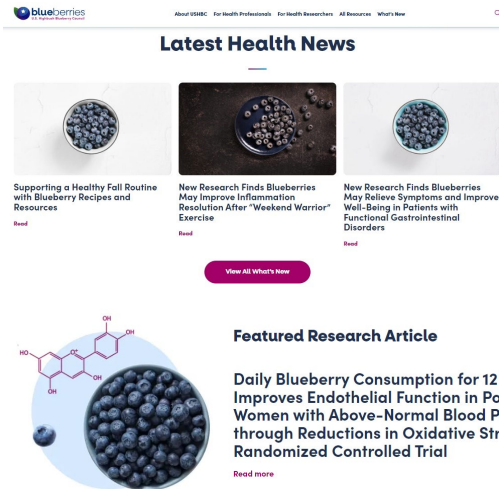
- Voice: 2,036,690
  - Engagement: 4,497
- NOTE: These metrics are an aggregation of varied tactics.*

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Awareness of the brain food/body connection and how food can impact how you feel
- Inspiration to incorporate more blueberries in the diet through a brain boosting recipe
- Understanding of the latest research linking blueberries to improved cognitive health

# Health Influencer Site

Maintained website as go-to destination for influencers seeking health information, research and resources about blueberries.



## KEY TACTICS:

- Fed website with refreshed toolkits, the latest research and researcher Q&As
- Continued to update the featured research study box to sync with key tentpoles

## TOP RESULTS:

- A healthy 1 minute, 33 second average visit duration, and below-average bounces (62%), indicating the site's relevance to our audience.
- 6,000+ views (reach) of toolkit pages, with the health influencers website – again – the most impactful among the three sites in securing material downloads.
- 4,500 views of the Scientific Research section, making it the #2 attraction behind toolkits. The top research page was for a study supported by USHBC, newly uploaded in 2023, and the focus of various targeted promotions.



## WHICH GENERATED:

- Reach (pageviews): 15,807
- Engagement (total events, goal completions): 3,115

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Awareness of USHBC as an industry resource
- Knowledge of the health benefits of blueberries and the latest efforts related to research

# Retail



# Executive Summary: RETAIL



	Newsletter	Retail Advertising
<b>Voice</b> (How loud were we?)	N/A	21,809,481
<b>Reach</b> (How many in our target audience heard us?)	5,420	662,344
<b>Engagement</b> (How many likely responded to the noise we made?)	678	684,393 (units moved)

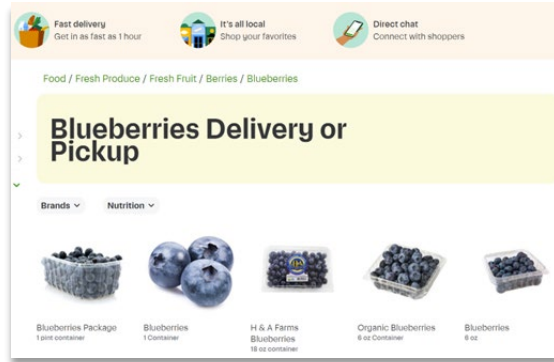
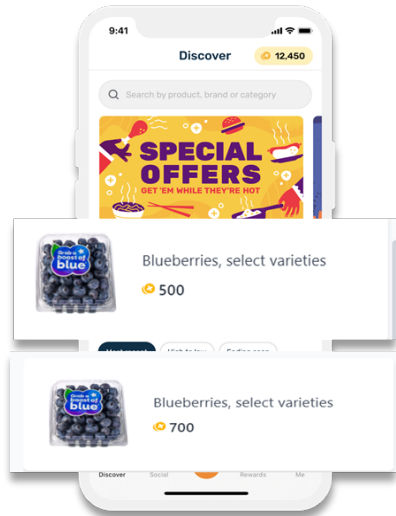
## TOP TAKEAWAYS

## KEY LEARNINGS

- Improved subject lines, distribution timing and resources continuously proved to be a strong driver of downloads/clicks in newsletters. This points to their utility for retailers and interest in promotions.
- An always-on strategy for Instacart advertising was proven to be highly successful and resulted in increased performance..

# Digital Advertising: Retail

Sales-driving program focused on generating demand in-store and online.



In 2023, USHBC's e-commerce efforts used shopper marketing platforms, rewards apps and ads at and around retail to drive demand and direct sales of blueberries.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Instacart
- Fetch
- Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH)

## TOP RESULTS:

- \$3.44M in sales during the Instacart campaign period.
- Fetch had \$427K in attributed sales from 85K redeemers.
- DOOH received 3.1M impressions, 100K over anticipated delivery.
- \$3.85M in sales and moved over 684K units of blueberries during campaign periods

## WHICH GENERATED:

- Voice: 21,809,481
- Reach: 662,344
- Engagement: 684,393

## AND DROVE AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Direct sales (units and volume) of blueberries



# Retail Email Marketing (Q1 only)

**Boosting Demand with Blues** provided useful information, resources and industry data for retailers, marketers and supermarket RDs.

Category	Dollars (\$)	Dollar % Chg. (vs. Q4 2022)	Volume (lbs.)	Volume % Chg. (vs. Q4 2022)
Total	\$659,510,280	+3.9%	549,040,461	+11%
Fresh	\$583,224,492	+3.8%	128,955,850	+13.7%
Frozen	\$76,285,788	+4.8%	21,084,611	-3.1%

Category Partners Nielsen Report, Excel Dashboard for 13 weeks ending 10.08.22 through 12.31.22

For more blueberry market information, insights and promotional resources, visit the [USHBC Retailer Hub](#) or contact [retail@blueberry.org](mailto:retail@blueberry.org).

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

From January to April in 2023, the *Boosting Demand With Blues* newsletter distribution list lost 16 valid subscribers. The final distribution list size was 333. At the same time, list churn was minimal with only 4 unsubscribes and a transparent churn rate of only about 4%.

## TOP RESULTS:

- April's email generated over 400 total clicks, with top content being USHBC Blueberries in Retail Report Q4 2022.
- The USHBC Blueberries in Retail Report Q4 2022 generated over 100 clicks alone, which resulted in being the top performing content for any email deployed in 2023.
- April's newsletter produced a 15.9% click rate, up 12% from the previous month.

## WHICH GENERATED:

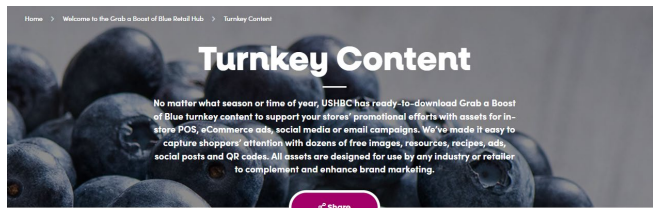
- Voice/Reach (# emails x # subscribers): 5,420
- Engagement (total clicks): 678

\*Note: Due to Apple's recent broad rollout of enhanced privacy tools, email open rates are longer possible to reliably calculate. We recommend using the same measure (number of recipients) for both Voice and Reach. Engagement – email clicks – can be reliably tracked as it was not affected by the iOS privacy changes.

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Resources for retailers, retail RDs and blueberry marketers
- USHBC industry leadership
- Engagement and awareness around the benefits of blueberries at retail

# USHBC Retail Hub



## Resources for Download

Click to explore:

Logo | Digital Shelf & eCommerce Assets | Blueberry Photos | Recipe Content | Social Media Content | QR Codes | More!



Lifestyle

Download Images

The Turnkey Content page, an always-on fixture serving up evergreen resources, rose to the top for the third year in a row.

## KEY TACTICS:

- Fed website with new and refreshed toolkits

## TOP RESULTS:

- "Turnkey Content" yielded 378 views, making the "Lifestyle" digital shelf images the #1 download in 2023.
- 250+ views (reach) of 2023 toolkit pages and 60+ downloads (engagements) of 2023 toolkit content.
- "The Blueberry Story" attracted 388 in reach, a sizable increase over 2022 (note: not factored into Retail Hub reach, since page is trafficked by other food influencers).
- 48 "Shopper Research" downloads.

## WHICH GENERATED

- Reach (pageviews): 2,027
- Engagement (total events, goal completions): 489

## AND BUILT AMONG TARGET AUDIENCES

- Awareness of GABOB positioning, opportunities for partnership, and the benefits of leveraging blueberries' health halo
- Access to amplify and participate in USHBC's 2023 Power Periods



# Thank you.

## Contact

Kevin Hamilton – [khamilton@blueberry.org](mailto:khamilton@blueberry.org)

Michelle Amoroso – [michelle.amoroso@padillaco.com](mailto:michelle.amoroso@padillaco.com)



# 2023 Retail Programs Results



# 2023 By The Numbers

## American Heart Month

- 9 retail operators
- 1600 stores participating
- Secured front-page ads at ABS-Portland and Meijer
- 11M in-store audio ad impressions

## Nat'l Blueberry Month

- 30 retail operators
- 9400 stores participating
- 14 retailers utilized USHBC point-of-sale
- 15 retailers conducted sales contests
- 43M in-store audio ad impressions
- SEG program targeting non-buyers resulted in 1 in 4 buyers new to category

## Grow HH Penetration

- Cooperative effort with Charlotte-area retailers
- Targeted ads delivering 14M impressions during Aug-Dec
- Drove 25K new households to purchase blueberries in first few weeks alone

## Promotional Partners

- Co-promotion with Chobani at Meijer
- Collaborative efforts with California Milk Advisory Board at Sprouts, Smart & Final, Nugget and Publix

# American Heart Month Power Period


**Grab a boost of blue**

## February is American Heart Month

Fresh blueberries are a deliciously healthy treat. Blueberries offer a variety of beneficial nutrients that support heart health.

- 1 Blueberries are a no-muss, no-fuss fruit that require no slicing or peeling – just grab a boost of blue, rinse and enjoy!
- 2 Fresh or frozen blueberries can help to improve overall health as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- 3 Blueberries contain just 80 calories per cup, and are a good source of fiber.

Find recipes and inspiration for Heart Health Month at [blueberry.org/blog/give-your-heart-a-boost-of-blue/](http://blueberry.org/blog/give-your-heart-a-boost-of-blue/)



**Grab a boost of blue**

3X REWARD POINTS

**3\$10**  
for **10**  
Member Price



**meijer**

Valentine's Day, February 14  
please good thru 2/14/23

**2.49**  
Blueberries  
18 oz.

**9.99**  
Cedar Plank Beef New York Strip Steak  
12 oz.

**5**  
Love  
Valentine's Day  
18 oz.



**Grab a boost of blue**  
Heart Healthy

## February is American Heart Month

Blueberries offer a variety of beneficial nutrients that support heart health. So make your heart happy and **Grab A Boost of Blue!**



**Shop Now** ►

**Grab a boost of blue**

**3.97**  
Fresh Sweet Blueberries  
18 oz.



**Grab a boost of blue**

## February is Heart Health Month!

Fresh blueberries are a deliciously healthy treat. Blueberries offer a variety of beneficial nutrients that support heart health.



# National Blueberry Month Power Period

**Snack Happy**



**BOOST YOUR SUMMER SNACKING**  
FRESH BLUEBERRIES & REAL CALIFORNIA DAIRY – THE PERFECT PAIRING

**SHOP NOW**

REAL CALIFORNIA MILK  
LOOK FOR THE SEAL.

Grab a boost of blue

**July is National Blueberry Month!**



Celebrate with a sample of our Blueberry & Paneer Summer Salad

REAL CALIFORNIA MILK  
LOOK FOR THE SEAL.

GOPI

Grab a boost of blue

Blueberry.org

Grab a boost of blue

**July is National Blueberry Month**



Grilled Chicken Blueberry Pecan Salad

Grab a boost of blue

**July is National Blueberry Month!**

Blueberries need no slicing or peeling and are a good source of fiber.



**Blueberry.org**

**PickWell** **Blueberry Smoothie Breakfast Bowl**  
BETTER-FOR-YOU SHOPPING GUIDE

What do you get in every boost of blue? Fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, and potassium. Beat the summer heat with this nutritious blueberry treat. Use Food Club frozen blueberries to make a refreshing smoothie bowl.



SCAN QR CODE FOR RECIPE OR VISIT [FOODCITY.COM](http://FOODCITY.COM)

**FPO**

Grab a boost of blue



# National Blueberry Month Power Period

**JULY IS NATIONAL BLUEBERRY MONTH**  
Blueberries 1 Pint **2/\$6**

**Grilled Fruit Kebabs**



SCAN HERE FOR RECIPE

Blueberries deliver four essential nutrients with a wide range of health benefits

**Grab a boost of blue**

- Cardiovascular Health
- Brain Health
- Healthy Living
- Insulin Response
- Gut Health



**Blueberries 1 Pint 2/\$6**

**No-Bake Blueberry Cereal Bars**



SCAN HERE FOR RECIPE

**Grab a boost of blue**

- Cardiovascular Health
- Brain Health
- Healthy Living
- Insulin Response
- Gut Health



**Jewel Oscop** ENTER TO WIN THIS  
**CLASSIC CAR**  
**Classic Cupcakes** 1954 Chevrolet 3100



**HERE'S HOW IT WORKS**  
Purchase one of our 3, 8 or 10 count participating cupcakes displaying the Classic Car Classic Cupcakes Sticker. Take a photo of your receipt & upload it to [www.jewelcargiveaway.com](http://www.jewelcargiveaway.com) along with the date & store number.

CAR PURCHASED AT 

[www.mgmclassiccars.com](http://www.mgmclassiccars.com)

No purchase necessary • Contest valid May 17th through September 26th, 2023

**Grab a boost of blue** Give your summer a boost of blue!

Sweet summertime just got sweeter with oh-so-many ways to love blueberries.

**Blueberries**

- Are a no-muss, no-fuss fruit that require no slicing or peeling.
- Can help to improve overall health as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Contain just 80 calories per cup and are a good source of fiber.





To learn more about the ease, convenience, health benefits and deliciousness of blueberries visit [blueberry.org](http://blueberry.org)




**ROUSES MARKETS** | **Grab a boost of blue**



**- ONLY -**  
**2/\$5**

**6 OZ CLAMSHELL Fresh Blueberries**  
Price good 6/28/2023 thru 7/5/2023.

# National Blueberry Month Power Period



**PICK UP FRESH BLUEBERRIES AND REAL CALIFORNIA DAIRY TO MAKE THESE RECIPES & MORE!**

**SHOP NOW**

**Smart & Final.**  
ONE TRIP & THAT'S IT.

[Get the recipes here](#)

Grab a boost of blue  
REAL CALIFORNIA MILK  
LOOK FOR THE SEAL

**Winn-Dixie**  
Publicidad

Blueberries are a good source of fiber and vitamin C and contribute essential nutrients like vitamin K and manganese.

Give your cereal a boost **Comprar**

Give your waffles



**Grab a boost of blue**

**July is National Blueberry Month!**

**Blueberries**

Sweet summertime just got sweeter with oh-so-many ways to love blueberries.

To enjoy the ease, convenience, health benefits, and deliciousness of blueberries visit [blueberry.org](http://blueberry.org)

- 1 Are a no-muss, no-fuss fruit that require no slicing or peeling.
- 2 Can help to improve overall health as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- 3 Contain just 80 calories per cup and are a good source of fiber.



# National Blueberry Month Power Period



# Impact of USHBC's July Program

<u>Retailer</u>	<u>\$\$ Sales Growth</u>	<u># of Stores</u>
Smart & Final	+206%	257
Market Basket	+155%	96
ABS SoCal	+52% (unit sales)	329
Winn Dixie	+43%	424
Redner's Markets	+40%	44
Jewel Osco	+36%	188
Lunds & Byerlys	+33%	29
Harmons Grocery	+26%	18
ABS Portland	+22% conv/+64% organic	140
United Supermarkets	+14%	97
Schnucks Markets	+12%	113

# Boost of Blue Power Period Tactics Deployed

USHBC-funded activations during both Power Periods which included:

- POS (10 different sizes)
- Sales contests
- Digital circular insert pages
- Print advertising (magazines, circulars)
- Points rewards offers
- Digital ads on retailer sites
- Social media activations
- Email blasts
- Buy/get offers
- Retail dietitian activations
- In-store audio advertising
- Targeted receipt messaging
- Display bins
- Grab A Boost of Blue logoed apparel
- Grocery TV (checkstand videos)
- Sampling events
- Prizing for consumer sweepstakes
- Limited-time product offerings
- Featured recipe placements
- Experiential marketing events

# TAKEAWAYS FROM 2023 RETAIL ACTIVATIONS

## Support Selected Power Periods with Retail Activations

- Power Periods create opportunity for national-scale retail trade promotions with 30+ retailers given sufficient budget allocations and lead times

## Increasing Household Penetration is an Intriguing Opportunity

- Early stages of program in Charlotte, NC is exposing how much USHBC doesn't know about capturing new consumers
  - How to we identify non-users?
  - What messages will be most compelling?

## 2024 Programs Would Benefit from Support from & Collaboration with Marketers

- Little direct contact was made with any retailers' suppliers during planning or activation of 2023 retail programs to date

**Thank you.**

# 2023 Foodservice & Food Manufacturing Consent Agenda

**SRG**

A top-down photograph of fresh blueberries scattered across a white, slightly textured surface. The berries are dark blue with a natural bloom, and some have small white flowers at their centers. They are clustered in the top-left and bottom-right corners, with a few individual berries scattered in the center and bottom-left.

## From the USHBC Strategic Plan:

Expand foodservice and food manufacturing marketing programs that **inspire innovation** and substantially **grow the value of blueberries** in the channel

# Foodservice



# Evolution of Program Objectives

## 2021-2022

- Leverage innovation to highlight trend knowledge and culinary expertise
- Restart in-person events and onsite engagements
- Test new sectors for support (K-12, C&U)
- Generate leads to nurture moving forward



## 2023-2025

- Convert leads to menu placements
- Balance equation of high-visibility long-game leads and faster conversion volume opportunities
- Capitalize on multi-year relationships to get valuable YOY data
- Leverage results of test-and-learn programs to inform areas for greater focus and investment



# Channel Evolution 2020-23

We follow the performance (growth, contraction, forecasts) of all sectors of the industry closely, and have flipped the weighting of our efforts since 2020:

2020

- QSR
- Fast Casual
- Casual
- Midscale
- Colleges & Universities
- K-12
- Healthcare
- Hotel



2023

- Colleges & Universities
- K-12 Schools
- Healthcare
- QSR
- Fast Casual
- Casual
- Midscale



# 2023 Tactics & Results



# Partnership Support & LTOs

## Approach:

- Continued to offer culinary innovation, patron data, promotional dollars and other support to key partners to inspire new menu offerings and make them as successful as possible
- Also worked to remind operators that blueberries are a year-round fruit, and successfully achieved new menu placements on fall and winter menus as well as summer this year

## 2023 Results:

- Ongoing engagement has yielded several new collaborations and menu launches, including:
- Modern Market:** Urban Farmer Salad, Blueberry Nutella Waffle, Blueberry Caprese Sandwich (ongoing menu item) >100k lbs annual est
- Fleming's:** Blueberry Black Garlic Filet >37k lbs 3 mo LTO
- Nordstrom:** Two new blueberry salads, blueberry bars and fresh blueberry fruit cups >6k lbs 4 mo LTO
- True Food Kitchen:** Blueberry pancakes, blueberry salad and other items that varied by location >30k lbs 3 mo LTO
- First watch:** Blueberry cornbread TBD lbs annual est



TRUE FOOD KITCHEN

NORDSTROM





Wendy's now counts the Blueberry Pomegranate Lemonade as one of their most successful launches in history. It is selling beyond expectations and *has become a permanent menu item.*

Estimated impact:  
≥ 7MM lbs. annually



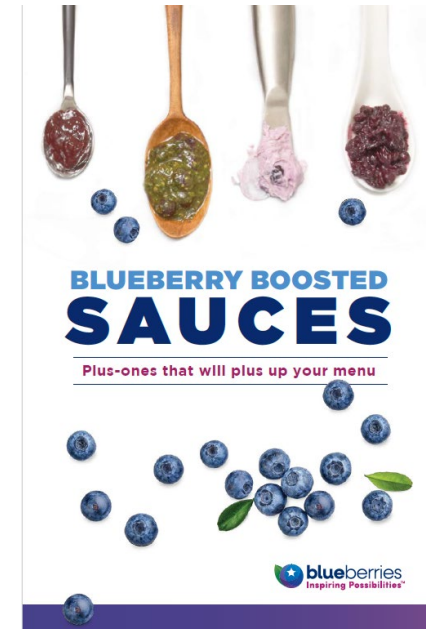
# C&U Activation

## Approach:

- Train-the-trainer style sessions where we educated and inspired culinary team decision makers across as many on-campus units as possible for broad and lasting impact on menus
- Included culinary inspiration and demonstrations, nutritional information and patron demand data to answer “why blueberries?”

## 2023 Results:

- Executed a training of over 140 University of Wisconsin culinary staff members
  - Engaged units are providing 10-15K meals PER DAY
- Provided assets for a student-facing activation as well, to help ensure success of new blueberry menu items by drumming up excitement and buy-in among students



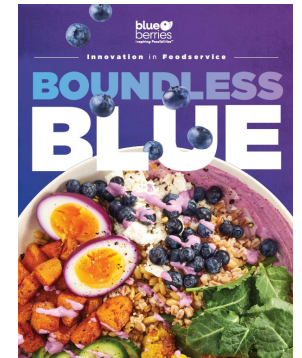
# CIA Healthy Menus Collaborative

## Approach

- Maintained engagement with Healthy Menus Collaborative members who have self-selected as having a genuine focus and interest in making their menus healthier

## 2023 Results:

- Presented case study of 2022 Jason's Deli partnership
- Built relationships with many of the two dozen high volume attendees, creating new leads to foster for future partnerships
- Distributed Boundless Blue culinary inspiration piece to all members



# Flavor Experience

## Approach:

- Maintained our visibility with major chain operators at this annual event, sampling multiple on-trend, menu-ready applications and presenting a special session on blueberry beverage development and demand

## 2023 Results:

- Awarded tasting toolkit for the second year (voted on by operators as a most-wanted presentation)! Featured blueberry beverage culinary inspiration and patron demand data
- Engaged with 300+ operator attendees, featuring menu items: Croque Madame Skewer with Blueberry Compote, Blueberry Playa Bowl Parfait, Baby Back Ribs with Blueberry MSG Rub, Chicken Skewer with Blueberry Black Garlic Miso Sauce
- Built relationships that led to several new Behind the Blueberry attendees and subsequent menu placements



# International Corporate Chefs Association (ICCA)

## Approach:

- Maintained engagement with this tight-knit group of high-volume (Top 200) operators

## 2023 Results:

- Hosted one of the group's monthly webinars and presented Plus One Sauces as a live culinary demonstration
- Sent a custom mailing of Boundless Blue and Plus One Sauces culinary inspiration pieces to all members
- Secured a summer program with Nordstrom as a result of this group
- Leveraged these relationships to secure several Behind the Blueberry attendees and subsequent menu placements



NORDSTROM



# Behind the Blueberry Experience



## Approach:

- Hosted behind-the-scenes blueberry industry immersion for a second year (this time in WA state / BC) to give VIP operators first-hand experience with growing and processing operations, educate them, and inspire them to use more blueberries on their menus

## 2023 Results:

- Reached 71 operators overall through pre-trip outreach and invitations, confirmed 11 attendees
- Attendees represented over 7000 units for potential impact
- Secured new menu placements from three operators within weeks of the tour (slide 7)
- Kicked off discussions for a partnership with another major national operator



# FSD Healthcare Share Group

## Approach:

- Volumetric study identified healthcare as a key volume-driving segment, with opportunity for further development
- \$34B in foodservice spend, with +2% growth forecast
- Test and learn with a single activation – a custom healthcare share group via Foodservice Director

## 2023 Results:

- 12+ major healthcare systems participated (hospitals, senior living facilities)
- Attendees saw a health research presentation from Dr. Wada, a live culinary demonstration and an overview of patron demand for blueberries
- Sent blueberry kits (with samples of all formats and culinary inspiration materials) to all attendees and offered ongoing support



# Chartwells K-12

## Approach:

- Chartwells gives us turnkey access to 665 school districts and 2MM meals daily through one central operating hub.
- In 2023 we continued our engagement with them through a smoothie program promoting frozen blueberries as well as a fresh fruit and veg program that built on USDA subsidy programs

## 2023 Progress:

- Fresh and frozen blueberry orders are up 11% YOY
- Blueberry packaged food product orders are up 42% since we began working with Chartwells in 2020



**Nutritional Benefits of Frozen Blueberries**

The nutrition boost you get from frozen blueberries can be so useful:

**80 cal per cup**

**Good source of fiber, at only 80 calories per one cup serving.**

The only thing as delicious as a frozen one.

**73%** of patrons believe blueberries make a dish more appealing

**74%** of patrons believe blueberries give dishes a pop of color

**72%** of patrons believe blueberries make a dish healthier

**64%** of patrons believe blueberries make a dish taste better

\*Source: U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council

chartwells  
learning to help healthy

**Get a Little Saucy With Blueberries**

Grab a boost of blue

Make a smoothie by combining a cup of frozen blueberries with your favorite yogurt and honey. Add a splash of almond milk for a creamy texture.

Blueberry Vinaigrette (1/2 cup)

Blueberry Cheesecake (1/2 cup)

Blueberry Ranch Dressing (1/2 cup)

Blueberry BBQ Sauce (1/2 cup)

Buffalo Blueberry Sauce (New York's Addition #2042)

Blueberry Balsamic Glaze (Tennessee)

chartwells

**GRAB A BOOST OF BLUE**

73% of patrons believe blueberries make a dish more appealing

74% of patrons believe blueberries give dishes a pop of color

72% of patrons believe blueberries make a dish healthier

64% of patrons believe blueberries make a dish taste better

chartwells

QR code: [chartwells.com/blueboost](#)

# K-12 Blueberry Toolkit

## Approach:

- Grew our engagement with K-12 districts through providing a turnkey asset that had the tools and answers for why and how to menu blueberries

## 2023 Results:

- Built a comprehensive toolkit to support K-12 FSDs, including:
  - Nutrition and meal guidelines by serving size
  - Format information
  - Recommended/appropriate menu applications/recipes with all necessary details per USDA regulations
  - Activities for students to deepen engagement
  - Case studies (e.g., Gwinnet County) of successful K-12 programs
- Promoted the toolkit through two SNA e-blasts reaching 40K school FSDs
  - 39% open rate, 736 clicks to upload page (nearly 300% of average CTR)
- Posted to USHBC website as an available asset for download



# Media Engagement with F&TM

## Approach:

- Quarterly advertorials and digital assets covering diverse uses for blueberries:
  - January: Top 10 Trends
  - April: Gen Z favorites (+ cover placement!)
  - July: Best of Flavor
  - October: Global

## 2023 Progress:

- Reached 35K+ operators with educational and inspirational blueberry menu application ideas



### TAKE A BLUE VIEW

Trend-forward menus reflect a balance of the familiar with the unexpected. Blueberries have the capability to play both roles, signaling comfort here, surprise there. Credit the ease with which blueberries can be used across all dayparts, in a variety of formats—from fresh to frozen, sliced to powdered—and demonstrating an enviable versatility for use in a bag of foods and beverages. Nutritional attributes and a deep-rooted popularity with patrons are added benefits. Is it any wonder blueberries find a place at the heart of so many enduring and emerging menu trends?

**Sing the Blues**  
Presentation is half the battle, but today's consumers are responding to visual aesthetics with even greater fervor connecting with the flavor and finding joy in the experience. They've also been trained for generations to "eat the rainbow" for nutritional benefits. "Blue foods are recommended for their anthocyanin value, which comes from powerful plant compound antioxidants called anthocyanins, which can help support optimal health," says Christine Wood, Group Account Director and Partner, LLC, on behalf of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council. A great source of vitamins and fiber, blueberries offer the perfect combination of nutrition, approachability, versatility and fun, checking off the boxes from both an aesthetic and functional standpoint.

The Blueberry Accents Toast (shown) put these values in action. A creative way to take the now-blueberry accents toast trend in a fresh direction, "It's so delicious and nutritious as it is eye-catching," says Wood. Boasting natural antioxidants, vibrant sweet-savory flavors, a strong health halo and visual appeal, it can be positioned as an all-day winner on men's. The build features pickled blueberries, blueberry-dusted cashews and a simple blueberry soft component that can be used in numerous other applications, providing another operational advantage.

**Stick To It**  
As sweet treats emerge as a trend primed for growth, blueberries can play multiple roles. "These Turkey Meatballs (right) showcase how blueberries can provide the perfect touch of sweetness in a savory, umami-forward dish," says Wood. The pair of color and texture adds visual differentiation, and the fruit also adds a pleasing textural component. Blueberries are also a natural source for the pleasant tartness that can be a complementary component of sweetened meat dishes. "They deliver that 'social something' to meals," says Wood. "While remaining familiar and approachable."

**Modern Mornings**  
As chefs wake up to the opportunity of utilizing items that connect with consumers, an emphasis on natural and seasonal ingredients that deliver tradition and novelty is equal measure. A blueberry "kiss" bowl or blueberry Chia Crisp both demonstrate how well blueberries play within an A-to-Z menu profile. "Both can serve as terrific complements to a breakfast bagel, croissant and/or a sweet frozen breakfast dish," says Wood. "Blueberries can provide a comfortable gateway to a less-expected flavor in any daypart."

**73% OF PATRONS BELIEVE BLUEBERRIES MAKE A DISH MORE APPEALING**

Discover more on-trend menu ideas featuring blueberries or contact us for custom innovation support at [blueberry.org/foodservice](https://blueberry.org/foodservice).

### Leveling Up Pizza

Blueberries are the must-have ingredient for trend-forward sweet-savory combos

Pizzas are perennially popular, cherished for their irresistible allure and timeless association with comfort. To ensure that offerings stand out from the competition and meet the demands of today, consider exploring a few current trends for inspiration.

In the 2022 Technomic Pizza Consumer Trend Report, an impressive 47 percent of those surveyed said they would like more restaurants to offer natural ingredients on their pizzas. Outstanding news up similar findings, reporting that superfoods are among the fastest ingredients currently growing on pizza.

Blueberries are of course both a natural ingredient and a superfood, providing the answer to both of those consumer demands. They bring their sweet tart flavor, plump juiciness, striking color, nutrient-dense profile and beloved familiarity. For operators, blueberries provide versatility, offered in a number of forms, including fresh, frozen, dried, powdered, candied, puffed, and freeze-dried. Here, we offer two "best in show" pizzas that demonstrate the premium power of blueberries as high contrast, big impact ingredients.

**70% OF PATRONS INDICATE A WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR A DISH WITH BLUEBERRIES\***

**SOUTHERN BLUEBERRY BARBACOA DEEP DISH PIZZA**  
Developed by Syenna Hackbart, Associate Culinary Director at Sterling Rice Group, on behalf of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, this hearty build starts with savory sweet flavor play and surprising elements. First, the deep-dish cornmeal infused dough is dotted with drained canned blueberries. It's then layered with a probiotic cream sauce, a white pizza sauce blended with blue cheese (optional), and topped with sharp cheddar.

Chunks of blueberry-brined beef barbacoa go on top (meat simmered in canned blueberries and apple cider vinegar and brined), along with a scattering of zesty pickled jalapeños. Chopped cilantro, a drizzle of blueberry barbecue sauce finishes the look.

**BLUEBERRY BLACK PEPPER AND BLUE CHEESE PIZZA**  
Smoky, savory, spicy, funky and sweet come together in this flavor-packed pie, developed by Hackbart. Artisan pizza dough is topped with a layer of black pepper blueberry compote, a blend of frozen blueberries, rosemary, thyme, red wine vinegar, Spanish onion, salt and pepper. Next, Parmesan cheese, blue cheese crumbles and bacon lardons are scattered across the pie. The pizza is baked until golden and then topped with arugula and Parmesan.

**49% OF CONSUMERS FIND SWEET-SPICY FOOD APPEALING OR INTERESTING APPEARING**

Find on-trend menu ideas featuring blueberries or contact us for custom innovation support at [blueberry.org/foodservice](https://blueberry.org/foodservice).



**FLAVOR WITH INFLUENCE**

**INCREASE APPEAL W/ BLUEBERRIES**

**ZHUZH UP YOUR ZA WITH BLUEBERRIES**

**MAKE FAN FAVES EVEN BETTER WITH BLUEBERRIES**

**CSR PATRONS OVER 35K\* IN THEIR INTEREST IN SEEING BLUEBERRIES ON PIZZAS & FLATBREADS\***

# Food Manufacturing

# 2023 Tactics & Results



- We partnered with Ingenuity to innovate a new blueberry product line
- Created a blueberry chia seed pudding for their brand Brainiac
- Launching in 2024
- HQ: Fremont, CA
- Brainiac® was started as part of a pursuit to provide the healthiest and smartest food for kids
- Producers of healthy kid snacks

**Estimated Volume**  
**250,000 lbs. by year 1**



# Custom Innovation for Forij

**Estimated Volume**  
**24,000 lbs. per year**

- Created a new flavor of Forij's granola incorporating dried blueberries
- Selling in 500 stores
- Low sugar granola that combines functional mushrooms, healthy & clean ingredients for improved energy, mood, and sleep
- Manufacturers of functional mushroom granola



# Behind the Blueberry Experience

On this year's VIP immersion into the Blueberry Industry (shared program across Foodservice and Food Manufacturing), we hosted two major food manufacturers:

- **Tillamook**, a global leader in dairy manufacturing with sales of over \$600MM (hosted their ice cream R&D lead)
- **Dessert Holdings**, a leader in cake, pie, cookie and bar manufacturing, sells into foodservice, with sales of over \$719 MM.
- Both prioritized blueberries for inclusion in future innovation projects



# The Future Is Blue

- Analyzed data in consumer packaged goods categories to uncover key opportunity areas for additional blueberry penetration
- Innovated new product protoconcepts within opportunity categories featuring various formats of blueberry ingredients
- Developed new inspiration collateral (printed and digital) to promote these innovations to product developers and R&D audience
- Will further broaden reach of this material through a webinar and eblast in Q1 2024



**Thank you.**

## AGENDA ITEM #9

### Scheduling of Next Meetings

# SAVE THE DATE!



The blueberry industry has never been more dynamic: high consumer demand, strong pricing and robust industry innovation. In this environment you can't afford to be left out. The Blueberry Summit provides blueberry growers, marketers, suppliers and stakeholders with the information and products they need to succeed.



**Join us September 25-27 in Denver, Colorado  
to explore inspiring blueberry possibilities  
that are sure to boost your bottom line!**

