



# BRAMBLE

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BRAMBLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

## The Economics of Happiness

*By John Ikerd. Presented at the North American Berry Conference on February 17, 2005.*

The 20th century was the “American Century.” During the 20th century, the United States replaced Great Britain as the dominant global economic power, and America’s corporate version of capitalism replaced socialism and competitive capitalism as the world’s dominant economic model. The U.S. came from behind to beat the Soviet Union to the moon and take leadership in space. The U.S. came from behind to pull ahead of Japan in electronics and communications technologies. And, America replaced the whole of Europe as the single dominant global military power.

The American Century was a time during which economics gained precedence over all else – including politics, society, and culture. America struggled economically, along with the rest of the world, during much of the first half of the century. But, America built the foundation for its modern industrial economy during World War II, used its post-war economy to help rebuild Europe and Japan, and afterward, never looked back. Research and development supported by economic growth allowed America to take world leadership in space and electronics. And, economic growth made possible the most powerful and dominant military force ever assembled in the history of humanity.

But, as we enter a new century, there are growing questions concerning the sustainability of the American economic engine of growth. Growing evidence of air and water pollution during the 1960s raised questions concerning the inherent negative environmental impacts of the industrial paradigm of economic development. The energy crisis of the

*Continued on page 10*

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

## NABGA Launches Its New Website!

*By Debby Wechsler, NABGA Executive Secretary*

By the time you receive this newsletter, NABGA’s new website will be up and running. Check it out at [www.raspberryblackberry.com](http://www.raspberryblackberry.com)! You’ll note that we’ve changed from [www.nabga.com](http://www.nabga.com) to this more descriptive name, since one of our main purposes with this new site is to reach out to consumers. Few people outside the industry know what “nabga” is, or even a “bramble.” We also assumed people might not remember which order “American Century.” Dto put the two fruits, so you can also get to the website if you type [www.blackberryraspberry.com](http://www.blackberryraspberry.com).

Please add a link to our website on your own website and let your customers know about our new website. We’ve worked hard to make it a valuable resource for consumers and therefor a useful marketing tool for bramble growers. The home page has easy-to-update “headline” boxes for both consumers and growers, as well as a menu for the main subsections: About NABGA, Consumers, Events, Growers, Kids, Media, Members Only, Membership, and Recipes. All of these have at least some information in them, except the Kids section, which I haven’t yet started to build (any suggestions?). The Consumer section currently has information on the industry and about the bramble fruits, quite a bit about health benefits, and home gardening resources. Our recipe section has more than 35 recipes and will continue to grow.

**Members Only Section:** This section is password-protected. It contains several features that ONLY members will be able to access: the most current newsletters, an on-line membership directory, a discussion forum, and an on-line Marketplace, where you can list services or items you would like to buy or sell. The password will change at least once a year, with notification by email. By the time you receive this newsletter, all members for whom NABGA has an e-mail address will have received the password. If you didn’t get it, I don’t have a current email address for you. Please email [nabga@mindspring.com](mailto:nabga@mindspring.com) or call me at 919-542-3687 to get the password. Note that it is *not* necessary that members have an email address to receive the password – it is just fine if you access the website from your teenager’s computer or the local library – we just don’t want to print the password in the newsletter. But if you do give us your e-mail address, you’ll be able to benefit from an additional feature of the website: our ability to send out bulletins and alerts to all members via email.

There’s still lots more to be done, and NABGA will continue to build and refine the website over time. Please let me know your suggestions and any problems you have using it. What would make the website more useful for you? What information or features would you like to see on it? Do you have recipes or photos we can use?

This website has been developed in partnership with the National Science Foundation Center for Integrated Pest Management, based at NC State University. CIPM has many years of technology experience and has developed websites for quite a few organizations and institutions. One of the great features about this website is the way it is set up so we can manage it ourselves, and can easily add, edit, move, or remove documents from the site, unlike many websites which require that all changes go through the webmaster. The site is fast, flexible, and responsive. We very much appreciate the work and support of NSF-CIPM in this project, especially our webmaster and designer, Eva Zurek, and CIPM Director, Ron Stinner.✿

## EVENTS

**June 29 —Caneberry Open House** at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center, Oregon State University, 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Numerous research and extension personnel, including NABGA members Dr. Bernadine Strik, Dr. Chad Finn, will be on hand to discuss their projects. For more information, visit <http://berrygrape.oregonstate.edu/news/events.htm>.

**July 14, 2005: Virginia Tech Small Fruit Field Day.** At Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 8:30 AM– 4:00 PM, \$10 registration fee (for lunch and materials). Program will include a strawberry research summary, a strawberry equipment demonstration, discussions of the raspberry cultivars trials and the blackberry shift trellis, a bramble breeding and cultural update, and a small fruit pest management update. For more information, contact Jeremy Pattison at [jpfruit@vt.edu](mailto:jpfruit@vt.edu). Directions and map may be found at [www.vaes.vt.edu/blackstone](http://www.vaes.vt.edu/blackstone).

**August 17-19 — Annual NASGA Summer Tour.** The North American Strawberry Growers Association 2005 tour, “Farming on the Urban Fringe,” will visit successful farms and orchards around New York City. Several of the stops raise bramble fruit, including Barton Orchards, in Poughquog, NY, a premier Pick-Your-Own farm raising strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, ribes, and grapes as well as tree fruit and vegetables, and a corn maze and Wilklow Orchards, in Highland, NY, which raises

60 acres of tree fruit as well as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, currants, and blueberries, sells at numerous farmers’ markets, and adds value by making jam, cider, and baked goods. An optional side trip to New York City will

visit Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market, one of the largest in the world, and take a tour of the city. For more information, contact NASGA at 814-238-3364 or [info@nasga.org](mailto:info@nasga.org) or visit [www.nasga.org](http://www.nasga.org).

### Mark Your Calendar for TWO NABGA Meetings!

Arrangements are still being worked out, but NABGA is planning to have TWO meetings this winter. Holding meetings in several regions will increase our outreach to the berry community, reduce costs for attending meetings, and allow us to focus our programs on regional needs while still bringing speakers of national significance. We envision having our “Taste of the Berry Fields” social event/fundraiser at both meetings.

#### January 6-7, 2006 – Savannah, Georgia

The first meeting will be in Savannah, Georgia, in association with the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association’s Southeast Fruit and Vegetable Expo. This conference hosted an extremely successful blackberry program last year and has a large trade show and extensive sessions on blueberries, peaches, and vegetable crops. This year, the North American Strawberry Growers will also be meeting here, on January 4-6, with their tour scheduled for January 5 and educational sessions on January 6. Our educational sessions are expected to be on January 6 and/or 7. A forum on the National Berry Crops Initiative (see “Briefly Speaking” on facing page) is also planned. Organizers will be working hard on the scheduling of these meetings so you can benefit from all of them! Our educational sessions here will concentrate on blackberries. We’ll have a opportunities for potential members to learn about NABGA and for discussion of the directions and programs of the organization and the needs of the bramble industry.

#### February 14-16, 2006 – Syracuse, New York

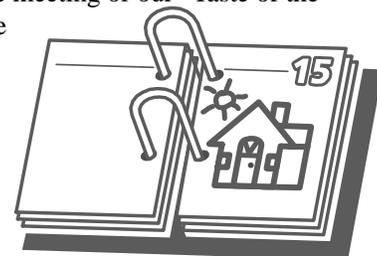
Here, we would meet in association with the New York State Berry Growers Association as part of the Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo, a much larger meeting, also with a large trade show. Educational sessions at this meeting would concentrate on raspberries. We’ll also hope to draw in new members to NABGA and again have opportunities for discussion of the organization and the needs of the bramble industry at this meeting as well.

#### NABGA Annual Meeting

Our official “annual meeting” will also be at the Savannah meeting. The Executive Council and Research Committee will meet to decide the budget and make research funding decisions, and Executive Council elections will be held. With NABGA’s new commitment to a more regional approach and improved communications, we plan to develop a way that members will still have the opportunity to vote on elections for Executive Council and on other major issues that may come before the annual meeting if they are not at the Savannah meeting.

If you have suggestions for either meeting, such as session topics or speakers, and/or would be interested in helping to plan the meeting or our “Taste of the Berry Fields,” please contact the NABGA office soon. Meetings don’t just happen – we need ideas and workers to plan and carry them out.

Hope to see you there!



**The BRAMBLE** is a quarterly publication of the North American Bramble Growers Association (NABGA) and is a benefit of membership in the association. For sample copy, reprint permission, membership information, and advertising rates, contact

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*The Bramble* © NABGA 2005

## Notes from the 2005 International Berry Health Benefits Symposium

By Tom Walters, NABGA Vice President

This Symposium, held June 13-14 in Corvallis, Oregon, was truly international; speakers came from the U.S., Canada, Finland, Spain, New Zealand, and Austria. The keynote address was given by Dr. Gary Stoner of Ohio State University. Dr. Stoner reviewed his group's outstanding feeding trials, which have shown that diets supplemented with black raspberries, blackberries, or strawberries prevented about half of the esophageal tumors in rats. In another test, black raspberries and strawberries prevented tumor development even when tumors had already been initiated. Their group has also shown that black raspberries prevent the development of colon cancer in rats. Preliminary studies indicate that the berry anthocyanins are very active in inhibiting cancer. They are continuing to explore the mechanisms of this cancer inhibition, and have also begun clinical studies to evaluate these benefits in preventing human cancer.

Dr. Ron Wrolstad (Emeritus professor of Food Science at Oregon State University) reviewed for us the relationship between anthocyanins, total phenolics, and antioxidant activity in blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and currants. Blueberries have most of their antioxidants in their skins, so small blueberries have the highest antioxidant levels. In general, antioxidant levels correlate well with anthocyanins, the pigments that make our berries so colorful. Dr. Wrolstad pointed out the fantastic diversity of anthocyanins (over 6,000 types!); these may help the plant by blocking different wavelengths of light. They also differ in their antioxidant properties, their metabolites, and their absorption rates. It may be that the best health benefits come from the **combination** of these compounds found in berries rather than from a single chemical.

Dr. Luke Howard (U of Arkansas) showed that blackberry anthocyanin levels generally vary among varieties, but

## Briefly Speaking...

For bramble growers at this time of the year, there is much to do with very little spare time for "extras." But as a NABGA member, your response to a couple of timely items is requested.

• **USDA Grades for Dewberries and Blackberries:** The Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA has announced that it would open a 60-day comment period (until August 22) for Dewberry and Blackberry standards and grades. While the standards apply mostly in the retail trade, consumer perceptions of our fruit at every purchase point are important to all of us. Take a look at the current standards, printed on page 4 of this newsletter. The NABGA office will help facilitate getting your comments to AMS.

• **Bramble Season Issues and Problems:** As you encounter production or marketing troubles during this season, make a written note of the details. After the season is over and you have time, submit these to NABGA. These could be used as possible topics for the *Bramble*, educational sessions, research topics, or as a basis for future projects.

• **Team Building:** We are well on our way with projects that will lead to accomplishing our objectives this year. With a plan for involvement, we now need to focus on expanding our membership to build a stronger team. During the season, you will be in contact with growers, suppliers, academic/Extension, or others associated with the bramble industry. With their permission, send their names and addresses to Debby Wechsler so that an invitation to NABGA membership may be sent to them.

I'm also pleased to report our participation in the **National Berry Crop Initiative**. In pursuit of specialty crop support for brambles, we have made great contacts for cooperative ventures with other associations and agencies. One of these contacts led to the appointment of your president and executive secretary to the steering committee of the National Berry Crop Initiative. The NBCI is "a partnership of industry, academia and government formed to develop a strategic research and extension plan for the continued growth and sustainability of berry crop production in the United States." You will hear more about this in the next newsletter and have opportunities to weigh in on the draft plan.

Have a great bramble year!

*Ervin Lineberger*

that some varieties (Kiowa) also vary significantly from one growing season to another.

Dr. Mary Ann Lila (University of Illinois) presented results showing that Northwest-grown blackberries were higher in antioxidants than the ones commercially grown in Mexico. Northwesterners rejoice! She looks at ways in which stress elicits accumulation of bioactive chemicals in plants. Perhaps someday this work will lead to treatments in the field to make an even healthier crop of berries.

Adding blueberries to the diet of pigs reduced their total serum cholesterol

(both LDL and HDL), according to the studies of Dr. Wilhelmina Kalt (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada). She also showed that blueberry anthocyanins could cross the blood-brain barrier, and could be found in the cortex. She found that blueberries had the best effect when part of a diet high in phytochemicals. There's that **combination** theme again... Or, as Henry Bierlink of the Washington Red Raspberry Commission pointed out, it looks like Mom was right about eating all of your fruits and vegetables...thanks, Mom!

Dr. Francisco A. Tomas Barberan

*Continued on page 8*

## Should Blackberry Grade Standards be Modified?

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has been asked to review the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grade standards for usefulness in serving the industry. AMS has identified the color requirement for possible revision and seeks comments regarding any other revisions that may be necessary to better serve the industry. All comments are due by August 22. *Please contact Debby Wechsler, NABGA Executive Secretary, with your comments by August 16 and we will facilitate getting them to AMS.*

### United States Standards for Grades of Dewberries and Blackberries<sup>1</sup>

#### Grades

§51.4270 U.S. No. 1.

“U.S. No. 1” consists of dewberries or blackberries of one variety which are firm, well colored, well developed and not overripe, which are free from caps (calyxes), mold and decay, and from damage caused by dirt or other foreign matter, shriveling, moisture, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

(a) **Tolerances.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 10 percent, by volume, of the berries in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of this grade, including therein not more than 5 percent for defects causing serious damage, and including in this latter amount not more than 1 percent for berries which are affected by mold or decay.

§51.4271 U.S. No. 2.

“U.S. No. 2” consists of dewberries or blackberries of one variety which fail to meet the requirements of the U.S. No. 1 grade but which do not contain more than 10 percent, by volume, of berries in any lot which are seriously damaged by any cause, including therein not more than 2 percent for berries which are affected by mold or decay.

#### Unclassified

§51.4272 Unclassified.

“Unclassified” consists of dewberries or

## Update on Specialty Crops Legislation

As we reported in the last newsletter, the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act became law in 2004. It is designed to boost the nation’s specialty crops industry, primarily through block grants to state departments of agriculture. The funding will be used to enhance the industry through technical assistance, research, promotion, education, nutrition and related initiatives. This law, however, though it *authorized* \$54.5 million annually for five years, included no funding *appropriation*.



In May of this year, the U.S. House of Representatives included \$7 million for the block grants authorized in the Specialty Crops Act in the House agricultural appropriations bill for FY06. The next step for the appropriations bill was full consideration by the U.S. House of Representatives in early June. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies marked up the Senate version of the FY06 agricultural appropriations bill in mid-June, as we went to press, *without* this appropriation. When we learned it was coming before the full Appropriations Committee the following day, NABGA faxed a letter to the committee’s chair urging that that at least the House appropriation of \$7 million be included. We also cranked up the member e-mail system of our new website and sent out an action alert. If funding is not included in the Senate bill, the next opportunity for supporters of this legislation is the conference committee which reconciles House and Senate versions of the bill. Stay tuned for further developments.

*If you are interested in working on legislative issues for NABGA, contact the NABGA office. Thanks to Sue Loomis Gragan, NABGA’s Region 4 representative, for researching the Ag Appropriations Committee members for us.*

blackberries which have not been classified in accordance with either of the foregoing grades. The term “unclassified” is not a grade within the meaning of these standards but is provided as a designation to show that no grade has been applied to the lot.

#### Definitions

§51.4273 Well colored.

“Well colored” means that the whole surface of the berry shall be a blue or black color.

§51.4274 Well developed.

“Well developed” means that the berries shall not be misshapen owing to anthra-



nose injury, frost injury, lack of pollination, insect injury, or other causes.

§51.4275 Override.

“Override” means dead ripe or soft, necessitating immediate consumption.

§51.4276 Damage.

“Damage” means any defect, or any combination of defects, which materially detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the berry.

§51.4277 Serious damage.

“Serious damage” means any defect, or any combination of defects, which seriously detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the berry. Berries which are badly deformed, crushed, leaky, moldy, decayed, or which have less than one-half of the surface covered with a blue or black color shall be considered as seriously damaged.

<sup>1</sup> Packing of the product in conformity with the requirements of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act or with applicable State laws and regulations.

## New Bramble Disease Found in Oregon

Oregon Department of Agriculture News, May 31, 2005

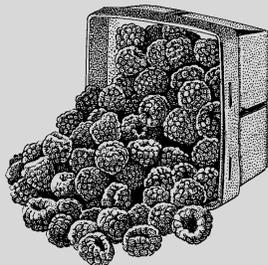
*Phragmidium violaceum*, a rust species new to North America, has reportedly been found along the southern coast of Oregon impacting weedy Himalayan blackberry plants. This rust is used for biocontrol of invasive blackberry in Australia, New Zealand, and Chile, where research has shown it to have a very narrow host range of specific weedy blackberry species.

Research is underway to confirm that Oregon's commercially produced and native blackberry varieties are not susceptible. Fungicides are available if desirable blackberries varieties are found to be susceptible. Currently, the rust is limited to the southern coast of Oregon in Coos and Curry counties. Identification of this particular rust is difficult and it can easily be confused with other blackberry diseases.

For more information and photos, visit the Oregon Dept. of Ag. website: [www.oregon.gov/ODA/news/050525rust.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/news/050525rust.shtml).

Comments Dr. Bernadine C. Strik, Oregon State University:

"I and others at OSU are working with the ODA to quickly test susceptibility of our true native blackberry *R. ursinus* and our commercial *Rubus* cultivars to this pest. Fortunately in other blackberry production areas, particularly New Zealand, this pest has not been a problem for commercial blackberries and if present can be controlled using existing fungicides. Still the first step here must be to test this fungus on our important cultivars."



## Summer Bramble Chores

*This list was developed by Dr. Gina Fernandez, Small Fruit Specialist at NC State University and reviewed and revised with the assistance of Dr. Marvin Pritts at Cornell. Chores and timing may be somewhat different in your area or for your cropping system.*

### Plant growth and development

- Fruit development.
- Rapid primocane growth.
- Floricanes senesce.
- Primocane fruiting types flower and produce fruit.

### Pruning and Trellising

#### Erect types:

- In warm climates with a long growing season, hedge (tip) the new primocanes when they are about 6-12" below the top wire of the trellis to encourage lateral branching. Continue hedging at monthly intervals to maintain desired branching and height of canopy (laterals should reach top wire).
- In colder climates, tip primocanes once when they are about 2 – 3 ft. tall to encourage lateral branching.
- Prune out spent floricanes after they have produced fruit, do not thin out primocanes until mid-to late winter.
- Train primocanes to trellis to minimize interference with harvest. Shift trellises or V trellises make this relatively easy.

#### Trailing types

- Train new primocanes to middle of trellis, or on the ground in a weed free area or temporarily to trellis outside of fruiting area (depends on trellis type).
- Cut back side shoots to 18" (after dormancy in cold climates).
- Remove spent floricanes after harvest.

### Weed management

- Mow along side of row to maintain the width of the bed to 3-4 ft.
- Weed growth can be very vigorous at the same time as the bramble crop peaks.
- Weed control is best done earlier in the season before harvest commences.
- Mow middles regularly to allow

pickers to move through rows easily.

### Insect and disease scouting

- Scout for insects
  - Raspberry crown borer (canes girdled and wilt)
  - Psyllid
  - Two spotted spider mite
  - June beetle
- Scout for diseases
  - Botrytis
  - Late rust
  - Sooty blotch
  - Orange rust
  - Powdery mildew

### Water management

- Bramble plants need about 1"-2" water/week, and this amount is especially critical during harvest.
- For blackberries (not raspberries) in warmer climates only, consider installing an overhead system for evaporative cooling to reduce sunscald. Turn on once or twice a day from 10 am to 3 pm for short periods of time (approx. 15 minutes).
- Give plants a deep irrigation after harvest.

### Nutrient management

- Take leaf samples after harvest and send to a clinic for nutrient analysis. Do not fertilize with nitrogen at this time of the year.

### Harvest and marketing

- The busiest time of the year for a blackberry or raspberry grower is the harvest season. Each plant needs to be harvested every 2-3 days. For larger plantings, that means fruit is picked from some part of the field every day of the week.
- Pick blackberries when shiny black for shipping. Those that are dull black are fully ripe and suitable for PYO only.
  - Pick directly into clamshells with absorbent pads OR for PYO use soft drink flats.
  - Keep harvested fruit in shade and move into coolers as soon as possible to lengthen the shelf life of the fruit.
  - Use forced-air precoolers for best removal of field heat.
  - Store at 32 to 34°F and 95% relative humidity.
  - Freeze excess fruit for jam, juice or wine.

## GROWER PROFILE

### A Long Time at Longmeadow

**Rudy Valonen, Val's Berries, Longmeadow, Massachusetts**

Raising berries started as a hobby for Rudy Valonen and as a teenage project for his son, Art, but it didn't take too long for Val's Berry Farm to become Rudy's second career and Art's adult occupation. Rudy started with a couple of acres of blueberries while working as an electrical engineer. "My son got interested in other kinds of farming," he recalls. "When he was sixteen, he got into growing strawberries. After a couple of years, he thought he should try some raspberries, and we planted the purple raspberry 'Success' and a primocane variety, 'August Red'." Two or three years later, they bought some land next door, and expanded further. Art, who's now in his 40s, became a full-time farmer. Rudy helped, especially with marketing, and especially after he retired a number of

years ago.

When Heritage had just been introduced for a few years, he recalls, "Art put in five acres of Heritage, thinking he'd be the first on the block, never realizing that people didn't expect fall raspberries, and no one hardly showed up for PYO. We struggled to figure out how to sell them, but after a couple of years people began to believe that they were real." The Valonens added more blueberries and various summer raspberries. "Some worked, some didn't," says Rudy. "It always seemed like the summer raspberries were a difficult crop to get harvested—it's hot weather, you only have a short time for the entire crop, and they take a lot of work when there's other work to be done. I've pretty well decided that primocanes have a much better potential of profit." Last year, the Valonens phased out the last of their summer raspberries and now grow fall-fruiting primocane raspberries exclusively. The farm currently raises about 15 acres of highbush blueberries, 2-3 acres of raspberries, about 3 acres of strawberries, and a few blackberries. They used to

raise more strawberries, but cut back, since they currently have quite a bit of competition from other nearby farms. Almost everything is sold PYO, except for some of the blueberries, which Rudy wholesales when there are more than their PYO customers can handle.

Rudy has been the more public face of Val's Berry Farm, interacting with buyers and active in regional organizations and in NABGA, where he served as a dedicated New England Regional Representative and Research Committee member for many years. "I have the time to think about what's going on," he says. "Agriculture is something I've always been interested in. I like to figure out why some things work and others don't. When you're trained as an engineer, you become terribly curious about a lot of things."

One aspect of bramble growing he has given a lot of thought to is the pros and cons of the varieties they've grown. He feels that development of primocane raspberry varieties with a broad range of ripening times is an important priority for the bramble industry, and he's looking



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for a variety that ripens in early August. “‘August Red’, says Rudy, “produces very early, and has all the good features of raspberries except it is short in stature. It only wants to grow to 2 ½ feet at best, and people don’t want to pick it – though they don’t mind bending over for strawberries.” This year, the Valonens are trying the new variety ‘Jaclyn’ from Maryland (see box) for an early crop. At the far end of the season, Val’s Berries can get frost by mid-September, but the Valonens are able to use irrigation for frost protection to keep going a few more weeks. “We sometimes pick until mid-October,” says Val.

Val’s Berries is located about seven miles outside Springfield, Massachusetts, and draws the bulk of its PYO customers from there, from the town of Holyoke, and from other smaller communities in the area. All fruit are sold by the pound except raspberries, which are sold by the pint. “We give them a tray and pint cups to fill,” says Rudy. The farm employs one or two helpers for PYO management, and occasionally hires local pickers for their blueberries.

Like many other growers, Rudy has noticed a decrease in the PYO business. “In the past, we would be overrun with

PYO customers,” he says. “Today, it’s not like that at all. Our society has been set up to have everyone working, otherwise you can’t have your two cars and nice home.” Advertising can help, he says, but the farm’s main strategy is to try to coax people that do come to the farm to tell their friends and neighbors. “We train the PYO staff to ask each person when leaving to ‘please tell your friends and neighbors.’” The farm collects customers’ addresses in a guest book and then sends out postcards with a simple message along the lines of “The strawberries are ready and everything is wonderful.” at the start the picking season for each crop. “We lie a lot,” laughs Rudy wryly.

Where is the farm going? Rudy expects it to continue down its current path. Most of the production tasks are in his son’s competent hands, and it’s likely the farm will continue focusing on PYO, trying new varieties, building from its many years of good customer relations—and that Rudy will continue to observe and think about how the farm is working and what adjustments will increase success.✿

*Rudy Valonen may be contacted at 81 Parker Street, E. Longmeadow, MA 12028, 413-525-1565.*

## More on the ‘Jaclyn’ Raspberry

The ‘Jaclyn’ raspberry is a new variety developed in Maryland through the Five Aces breeding program operated by Harry Swartz. The Valonens received their plants from Nourse Farms, though the variety, known as QEG before receiving its commercial name, is not yet in their catalog. Says Tim Nourse, “Rudy’s been asking me for it for several years. I’ve had limited plants for testing, and should have a limited quantity to sell next year (though it may still not be in the catalog).”

“It’s supposed to be an early primocane in the same season as Polana and Autumn Britten. It’s a very firm berry—it has the smallest plug of any raspberry I’ve ever seen. It has a darker color than the standard primocane varieties, but very good flavor.” Because of the color, Tim predicts that this variety will likely be suitable for Eastern and Midwestern growers, but not for the West Coast wholesale crop.

## Brambles as State Fruit?

Many states have state symbols – trees, animals, flowers, fruit, foods, even a state cooking pot in Texas. These symbols don’t mean a whole lot, but offer at least a talking point, perhaps the recognition of a leading industry, a native species, or a historical element. Often the choosing of these symbols is initiated by fourth or fifth graders researching their state for class, but when different commodities get into the act at the legislative level, it can get pretty complicated! A few years ago, North Carolina tried to satisfy everyone by choosing the strawberry as its official state RED fruit, the blueberry as its official BLUE fruit, and the scuppernong grape as its official fruit. Go figure...

Recently, Kentucky chose the blackberry as state fruit in 2004. An article by Monica Newton Tate in the

*Sentinal News* ([www.shelbyconnect.com/articles/2004/04/07/news/news01.txt](http://www.shelbyconnect.com/articles/2004/04/07/news/news01.txt)) said, “The humble blackberry has recently withstood assault, mockery and humiliation while simultaneously growing greater in prominence. Last week, the Kentucky General Assembly named the blackberry the state’s official fruit...when it passed a television reporter quipped, ‘The blackberry bill gets passed while the governor’s budget proposal gets caught in a jam.’”

Another story, however, linked the state fruit story to local growers and health research involving blackberries – much better publicity! This story said, “Blackberries, the Kentucky state fruit, could prove to be the missing link in preventing or ultimately treating certain forms of cancer. Wayne Shumate and Billy Gatton Jones, owners of WindStone Farms, enthusiastically support Dr.

Vincent S. Gallicchio, Professor in Clinical Sciences and Internal Medicine at the University of Kentucky, in his request for funding approval to conduct the research.” (See the story at [www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=20708](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=20708).)

Alabama also chose the blackberry as its state fruit in 2004, but peach growers are actively working to get the peach chosen as the official “tree fruit.”

A quick websearch did not reveal any state with the red or black raspberry as its state fruit. A resource with symbols for *all* the states is [www.netstate.com/states/index.html](http://www.netstate.com/states/index.html) – but you have to check the states one by one.

Let NABGA know if you know of any other bramble state fruit. If your state has no state fruit, maybe we can mobilize those fourth graders to lobby for raspberries...✿

## International Berry Health Benefits Symposium

*Continued from page 3*

(CEBAS Institute, Murcia, Spain) investigated the ways in which the beneficial ellagic acid and ellagitannins are metabolized. These compounds do not themselves move into the bloodstream, but he showed that they are metabolized in the colon into urolithin B, a known cancer-preventative compound which does move into the bloodstream.

Dr. Shioh Wang of the USDA's Beltsville Fruit Laboratory described an impressive effort to evaluate many factors affecting the anticancer and antioxidant properties of berry fruits. For example, antioxidants can be increased by high light levels, high temperatures or tea tree oil (methyl jasmonate). She also showed many effects of berry extracts or bioactive compounds on cancer-related protein functions.

Dr. Lyndon Larcom (Professor of Physics and Microbiology at Clemson University) gave us an excellent perspective on mutation and cancer development. He explained that cancer development requires not one but multiple cell mutations; most cancers have 4-8 mutations. Mutations happen all the time, but fortunately, our bodies have very efficient mechanisms for repairing mutations. However, we also have a less efficient, error-prone repair which is itself a major source of mutation. Dr. Larcom's work showed that blackberry extracts shut down error-prone repair, and should therefore be effective cancer preventatives. He particularly suggested that Chester or Navajo blackberries could be incorporated into an effective cancer-preventative skin cream.

If you chewed tobacco, you would probably quit after Dr. Bruce Casto's talk (Ohio State University). Then again, perhaps you should switch to chewing black raspberries! Dr. Casto reviewed the tragic statistics on oral cancer: 90% of the oral cancers are squamous cell carcinomas linked to exposure to alcohol and tobacco. The 5-year survival rate is only 50%, and has not improved in recent years. Dr. Casto showed that having 5%

freeze-dried black raspberry in the diet significantly reduced the number of oral cancers in hamsters having the misfortune to be exposed to tobacco carcinogens. He is looking at the mechanism of this, and is designing clinical trials to prevent oral cancer. Similarly, Dr. Laura Kresty (also of Ohio State) is investigating the use of freeze-dried black raspberries in suppressing development of a type of esophageal cancer.

Dr. Rui Hai Liu (Cornell University) presented a wealth of evidence that regular consumption of fruits and vegetables reduces risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. Mom would love him! He is interested in the synergistic effects of phytochemicals from different foods, and showed synergistic benefits of Lectin vitamin E, and cranberry and apple juices.

Our source of boysenberry information was Tony McGhie, all the way from New Zealand. In his studies, he found that the anthocyanins of boysenberry could be transported into the blood in the jejunum, and that a diet rich in boysenberries resulted in higher antioxidants in the bloodstream.

Over the years, plant biochemists have studied the metabolism of anthocyanins in plants, but Dr. Ronald Prior (USDA-ARS) is unearthing their metabolism in animals. In pigs, he found that some, but not all of the anthocyanidins are modified. Anthocyanins with complex glycosylation patterns stay in the gut longer.

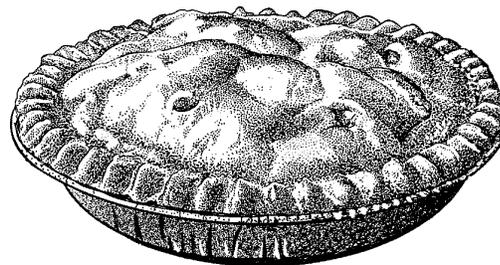
Have you ever heard about the benefits of blueberries to the aging

brain? If so, chances are the research came from the group headed by Dr. James Joseph at Tufts University. He has shown that many fruits and vegetables alter cognitive function in aging rats, but only a few (like blueberries) altered mental function. High levels of anthocyanins in the diet enhanced searching activity in rats. Blueberry anthocyanins were good for memory of shape; strawberry anthocyanins were good for memory of place, which is managed in a different part of the brain. Blueberries helped old rat neurons talk to each other better, and Dr. Joseph is interested in combining blueberries with Alzheimer's-suppressing drugs like Reminil to combat this progressive disease.

Dr. S. Porta (Institute of Applied Stress Research, Austria) found that consuming elderberry concentrate before a training run reduced lactate increase.

Many of us have already heard of the granddaddy of berry health benefits: drinking cranberry juice prevents urinary tract infections. As Dr. Amy Howell (Rutgers) described, cranberries are unique in an anti-bacterial adhesion activity. They may have a benefit in the colon, as well. This effect may be due to the particular type of proanthocyanidins found in cranberries. The NIH just invested a lot of money in cranberry health benefit research, so expect to hear more good news about cranberries in the next three or four years.✿

*Tom adds, "I don't know if Proceedings will be made available, but I can provide copies of the brief presentation summaries upon request."*



Do you have favorite blackberry or raspberry recipes? Does your farm put out a cookbook? Are you aware of any blackberry/raspberry cookoffs at local festivals? Do you sell to a restaurant whose chef would provide a recipe using your fruit? Share the recipes through the NABGA website. Send them to the NABGA office via mail, fax, or email, and we'll add them to our collection.

## GROWER PROFILE

### Development of a simple system for blackberry shelf life evaluation

*Principal Investigators: Penelope Perkins-Veazie, USDA, ARS, SCARL, Lane, OK and John Clark, Univ. Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR*

Blackberries of named selections, selections with observed attributes (firmness), and new selections from Dr. Clark's breeding program were harvested at weekly intervals from June 1 to June 24 (a total of 4 harvests). Fruit were harvested directly into ½ pint clamshells and held on ice (at 5-10C) until arrival at Lane by car. Fruit were placed at 41 F for 7 days or at 68 F for 2 days. Additionally, subsamples of berries free of injury or decay and firm were placed on paper towels in egg cartons and held at 100% RH at 72 F for 2 days to stimulate fungal growth.

**1. Comparison of shelf life at 41 F to 68 F** (see table 1). Although the relative humidity was lower at 68 F, the higher temperature still adversely affected shelf life compared to 41 F. Thus, one temperature/RH regime cannot be substituted for the other. It may be necessary to try storing fruit for one night at 68 F. Oddly, although decay increased at the higher temperature, fruit firmness was not affected. This may be due to the lower relative humidity and the greater water loss at 68 F.

**2. Comparison of shelf life of known varieties to selections** (see table 2). Overall, use of a percent marketable score appears to have potential in determining the shelf life of blackberry selections. There was not a perfect fit, partly due to high rainfall prior to some harvest dates, yearly variability, and some as yet unidentified factors. For instance, Arapaho is normally used for national

shipment but was relatively poor this year, and Navaho, normally a very firm fruit, was not as firm.

Shipping rank indicate the best outlet for the selection, based on the percentage of marketable fruit, with <50 not good, 50-64 better, 65-74 for regional use, and >75 of national shipping potential (can stand up to cross country shipment). Percentage of marketable fruit represents an average of the variables decay, leak, and softness.

We were unable to obtain enough high quality fruit to evaluate subsamples of each selection in a 100% relative humidity environment. It was observed that the cultivars with extraordinary shelf life, like Navaho, had little decay (15%) under these conditions, while most selections were 30-50%, and Choctaw had 75% decay. In previous years, concentration has been on shelf life performance at simulated retail/grower conditions of 41 F, 80% RH. Incorporation of clamshell storage in high humidity (100%) will be attempted in 2005 to further explore this system for shelf life evaluation.

**3. Comparison of variables as indicators of shelf life.** Correlation analysis of selections indicated that the most

**Table 2. Shelf life of blackberries held for 2 days at 68 F or 7 days at 41 F (fruit of each selection were held at both temperatures)**

Selection	SHIP RANK	% marketable fruit	% decay	% leak	% firm
A2195	poor	42	66	97	73
A2315	poor	44	69	87	70
A2314	poor	47	65	72	58
APF53	poor	47	57	84	63
APF44	local	54	62	64	78
APF40	local	55	55	71	71
A1800	local	57	68	58	94
A2255	local	58	54	63	81
A2066	local	60	70	50	89
Shawnee	local	62	47	54	74
A2252	local	62	51	48	70
APF12	local	62	46	54	68
Choctaw	local	63	50	56	75
APF8	local	63	49	56	87
Apache	regional	65	54	50	99
A2214	regional	66	41	50	82
A2190	regional	68	45	43	85
Kiowa	regional	70	30	49	84
Arapaho	regional	71	42	40	87
A2215	regional	71	37	47	83
A2091	regional	74	36	35	88
Ouachita	national	75	36	31	92
A2179	national	75	23	45	83
A2189	national	75	44	30	97
A2218	national	75	39	34	96
A2222	national	75	73	26	92
A2098	national	76	44	19	87
A2035	national	78	22	32	87
Chickasaw	national	79	23	32	84
A2241	national	79	28	35	90
Navaho	national	81	26	22	78

**Table 1. Comparison of berry shelf life at 68 F (70% RH) vs 41 F (85%RH) (all selections)**

Temperature	Days stored	% marketable berries	% decayed berries	% leaky berries	% soft berries	% weight loss
41 F	7	69a	35a	40a	18a	1.53a
68 F	2	56b	56b	57b	18a	3.94b

correlated independent variables were decay and leakiness of fruit. This is encouraging, as determining leaky or decayed berries is simple.

### Conclusions

Based on the first year of this study, holding a subset of berries at 100% relative humidity may be very useful in separating selections that appear to be firm when harvested yet quickly change in storage, such as Choctaw.✱

*This report was received in December 2004. NABGA funded this project for a second year in February, 2005.*

## The Economics of Happiness

*Continued from page one*

1970s raised concerns about the extractive nature of the “free market” economy, and its inherent reliance on limited supplies of nonrenewable resources. The emergence of an economics of narrow, individual self-interest during the 1980s raised concerns about the growing economic gap between the “haves and have-nots.” And, when the “economic bubble” of the 1990s burst at the turn of the century, many more people began to question whether America’s economic growth is sustainable.

Until recently, the environment has been the focus of primary concern for sustainability. Relentless economic growth was depleting nonrenewable resources and polluting the natural environment. Today, there are growing questions of social and cultural sustainability. Concerns are not limited to the exporting of American jobs to other countries. There is growing evidence that our relentless pursuit of economic

prosperity is separating people within families, communities, and society as a whole and is destroying the social fabric of our country.

In our quest for global economic supremacy, the United States has become a splintered nation of disconnected people. Consequently, we live in an increasingly unhealthy society. The health of any society is reflected in the quality of relationships among its people – within families, communities, and society in general. During the latter half of the twentieth century, as American society has become increasingly disconnected, our relationships have become increasingly unhealthy and dysfunctional, and there is growing evidence that we live in an unsustainable society.

We Americans, in general, spend so much time and energy pursuing success that we have very little time left for other people, or even for ourselves. Those of us who succeed in achieving wealth or recognition from our peers, often sacrifice family, friends, and other personal relationships in the process of achieving. We focus so intently on the

economic bottom line that we lose sight of the line that separates caring from carelessness and right from wrong. We trade personal relationships and ethical righteousness for material success.

Those few who achieve success soon discover that neither wealth nor fame can ensure happiness. Those who work and strive for success eventually discover they can never have enough money and enough recognition. Most of us will never achieve wealth or fame, because both are defined by the few who achieve them and the many who do not. Most workers and strivers live their whole lives believing if only they could have been successful, they would have been happy – as Thoreau wrote, leading “lives of quiet desperation.”

I have seen this desperation in the lives of those who work both in corporate offices and on factory assembly lines, in the halls of Congress and government bureaucracies, in administration of our local schools, in civic organizations, and even in our churches. I have also seen it among entrepreneurs who operate small businesses and among families who

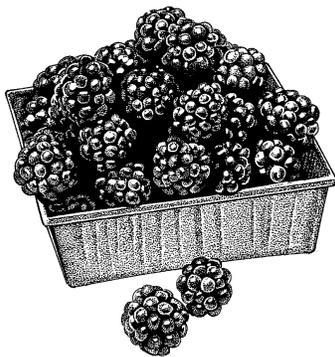
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operate farms. In pursuing the economic and political values that bring fleeting success, we have lost sight of the enduring, lasting values that bring true happiness. In our pursuit of economic success, we Americans have lost sight of the real purpose of life's journey, which is happiness.

Historically, happiness has been widely accepted as the motive of all purposeful human activity. The drafters of the Declaration of Independence, for example, listed "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" among the inalienable rights of all people. Philosophers throughout the ages have spent a lot of time thinking about happiness. The *hedonist* philosophers equated happiness to sensory pleasures – to individual, personal experiences. However, another group of philosophers, including Aristotle, used the word *eudaimonia* for happiness. *Eudaimonia* is inherently social in nature – it is realized by individuals, but only within the context of family, friendships, community, or society. Aristotle's happiness, social happiness, was a natural product of positive personal relationships.

Equally important, this social happiness was considered a by-product of actions taken not to achieve some sensory satisfaction, but instead, taken for their own sake – because they were intrinsically good. In essence, Aristotle and his followers believed that true happiness was not something to be pursued, but instead, was a natural consequence of *righteous* living. So, happiness is not about doing, it is about being; it is not about achieving, instead it is about

relationships and righteousness.

In our pursuit of *hedonistic* economic success, we Americans have abandoned the social happiness of *eudaimonia* and we have suffered the inevitable consequences.

Nowhere are the consequences of our self-centered, materialistic American lifestyle more evident than in the American food and farming system. Americans want their food to be quick, convenient, and cheap. We have accepted as an article of faith that our food should be cheap, and we boast that the average American

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*In our pursuit of economic success, we Americans have lost sight of the real purpose of life's journey, which is happiness.*

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spends just a bit more than a dime of each dollar of disposable income for food. In reality, we spend less than two cents of each dollar of income for food, because eight cents of each "food dime" goes to pay for processing, transportation, storage, packaging, advertising, etc. – not for food.

Eighty percent of the total value of food is value added beyond the farm gate, but added value also requires added cost. And the vast majority of these added costs are associated with the various functions that make food quicker and easier to prepare or otherwise more convenient for the consumer. Most of the rest, such as costs of advertising and packaging, are spent to convince us of the wisdom of our preference for convenience.

nience.

A growing American addiction to quick and convenient food is evident in the increasing share of our food dollar spent at restaurants and other eating establishments – a share approaching half of total food purchases. "Fast food" places account for nearly half of all food consumed away from home.

But, quick and easy food comes at a high cost – a cost far exceeding the dollar and cent cost we pay at the supermarket or eating establishment. Eric Schlosser, in his recent best seller, *Fast Food Nation*, addresses the cost of the American "love affair" with fast foods. He states, "Fast food has triggered the homogenization of our society. Fast food has hastened the malling of our landscape, widening of the chasm between rich and poor, fueled an epidemic of obesity, and propelled the juggernaut of American cultural imperialism abroad." He documents how quick food has lured us into choosing diets deficient in nearly everything except calories, supporting practices deceptive in every aspect from advertising to flavoring, and systems that degrade nearly everyone and everything involved in the process.

Our addiction to convenience also is wresting control of the food system from consumers, placing it instead into the hands of a few giant, transnational corporations. A handful of giant agribusiness firms, allied by various business arrangements, to form giant "global food clusters" now dominate food markets globally. By controlling the food system – the processing, storage, packaging, and distribution necessary to make food convenient for consumers – these firms are controlling the global food system. The greatest cost of our addiction to convenience may well be the loss of control over our food supply.

The negative consequences of our quest for *cheap* food are seen most clearly in the demise of family farms and the decay of rural communities. A competitive marketplace forced farmers to specialize, standardize, and consolidate – to industrialize their farming operations – in order to reduce costs of

*Continued on next page*

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## The Economics of Happiness

*Continued from previous page*

production and bring down the costs of food. The number of farmers in the U.S. dropped from more than six million in the 1930s to less than two million in 2000. And, today's farm families earn more than ninety percent of their total household income from off-farm sources, whereas farms in the 1930s were mostly full-time family farms.

The demise of family farms has resulted in the decay of many rural communities. Fewer farm families have meant fewer people to buy clothes, shoes, and groceries on Main Street, but also, fewer farm families to help support local schools, churches, and civic organizations. In addition, large-scale farming operations often bypass local communities when marketing their products and purchasing inputs. As a result, many of the most economically depressed areas in the U.S. today are agriculturally dependent counties. Today the corporatization of agriculture through contract production, the final stage of consolidation of

control, is pitting neighbor against neighbor, turning farmers into corporate hired hands, and ripping what's left of the rural social fabric to shreds.

The industrialization of agriculture has resulted in degradation of the rural environment. The consequences of mechanization, agri-chemicals, and large-scale, confinement animal feeding operations have been excessive erosion of soils, pollution of streams and groundwater, and depletion of the soil organic matter and biological diversity upon which our food production ultimately must depend. Agriculture has become the number one non-point source of stream pollution in the U.S.

Even those farmers who have survived economically have sacrificed the happiness of farming. Most conventional commercial farmers today will admit, "Farming just isn't fun anymore." It's not just a matter of lack of profitability; it's also their loss of a sense of being part of a community and the lack of integrity in their relationships with their animals and with the land. Most conventional farmers today, even so-called successful farmers, advise their children

to leave the community and to get an education, so they can do something other than farming for a living. This is hardly indicative of happy farm families or expectations of a happy future in farming.

It's time to stop and ask, "Is this the kind of agriculture we want?" "Is this the kind of society we want?" "Is this what we want to be? If the *hedonists* were right, then Americans should be the happiest people on earth. Americans probably spend more money on themselves, for their own sensory pleasure, than has any people at

any time in human history. But, our wealth has not brought happiness. The evidence continues to grow that lasting happiness is to be found in positive relationships, in family, community, and society, and in righteous living – in social happiness, not in the narrow pursuit of *hedonistic* self-interest. It's time to stop

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*I don't believe the demise of family farms, the degradation of the rural environment, and the decay of rural communities can be so easily justified as simply declaring them the inevitable consequences of a free market economy.*

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and ask, "What kind of people do we really want to be?"

To most economists, if the economy is growing, if it is getting bigger, then the economy is getting better, regardless of the consequences for social equity or environmental integrity. But, I simply don't believe that a bigger economy necessarily results in a better society or that a more economically efficient agriculture is necessarily a better agriculture. I don't believe the demise of family farms, the degradation of the rural environment, and the decay of rural communities can be so easily justified as simply declaring them the inevitable consequences of a free market economy.

But, why would anyone pay any attention to me? First, I am an economist, and have been one for more than thirty-five years. I have been a professor of agricultural economics at the major state agricultural universities in North Carolina, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Missouri. I grew up as a farmer – on a small dairy farm in Southwest Missouri. But, I also operated a small business during my high school years and I worked in management for three years for a major meat packing company – Wilson Foods – after graduating from college. Perhaps most important, I spent three-fourths of my life and half of my professional career believing and teaching the very things that the agricultural establishment is

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extolling today. I know where these folks “are coming from” because I have “been there.”

I used to tell farmers that they were going to have to either “get bigger or get out.” I told them they were going to have to become sharp financial managers, smart personnel managers, and astute marketers, because the only farmers with the future were those who saw farming as a business, rather than as a way of life. I cautioned farmers to separate farm business from family business, and not allow family matters be an economic drag on the farm. I believed the family farm was of the past, not of the future.

However, during the farm financial crisis of the 1980s, I began to feel that something was terribly wrong in American agriculture. Many farmers had borrowed heavily at record high interest rates to expand production to meet booming export demand during the 1970s, only to see exports dry up, commodity prices plummet, and record farm profits turn into disastrous farm losses. The agricultural establishment at the time chastised these farmers as poor managers who should have known better than to borrow so much, or at least should have known how to survive the inevitable hard times of farming. However, I discovered that the farmers who were in the biggest financial difficulty were those who had been doing the things that the agricultural establishment – including me, and my economic colleagues – had been telling them they should do. I came to realize that I had been much more a part of the farm problem than a part of the solution.

Many farmers I talked with had not followed the advice of us so-called experts. They were not overly specialized; they had maintained some diversity of enterprises, and some enterprises were still profitable. They had minimized their dependence on costly chemical inputs and farm equipment, so their cost-price squeeze wasn't quite so tight. They had not bought land to expand their operations, so their debts were more manageable. The farmers we economists had branded as laggards – resisters of new technologies and new ideas – were at least coping with one of the most severe

economic farm crises of the century.

I eventually concluded that we economists, and other agriculturalists, were simply out of touch with reality. We had been trying to transform farming into something that it was not and could not be. We had treated the farm as if it were simply a factory without a roof. We had encouraged farmers to specialize, standardize, and consolidate, as if farming were a manufacturing process. However, I was beginning to understand that real farming is fundamentally different from working on an assembly line or managing a factory. Farming isn't just about minimizing costs or maximizing profits; it's about nurturing and caring for living things – plants, animals, people, and even the wild things of the fields and forests and living things in the soil. The family nurtures the farm and the farm nurtures the family, and the family nurtures, and is nurtured by, the biological and social community.

Luckily, at about this time, something called sustainable agriculture was making its way onto the national agricultural scene. The more I learned about sustainable agriculture, the more I realized that it might answer my growing questions concerning why the agriculture I had been promoting wasn't working. But more important, in sustainable agriculture, I felt I might find a reason to believe again in the future of farming.

I returned to Missouri, my home

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*Farming isn't just about minimizing costs or maximizing profits; it's about nurturing and caring for living things – plants, animals, people, and even the wild things of the fields and forests and living things in the soil.*

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state, in late 1988, to work with farmers interested in this new kind of farming. My first understanding of sustainable agriculture was that of a *balanced* approach to farming. Missouri had a highly successful extension program back in the 1950s that focused on balancing farm profitability, soil conser-

vation, and family living; it had been called the Balanced Farming program. The program had been driven by the need to increase farm income, but without degrading the land or the quality of family life. Sustainable agriculture was being driven more by the environmental concerns being raised by a profit-driven, industrialization of agriculture. But, the needs for farm income and for a desirable quality of farm and rural life were still there.

People were beginning to understand that an agriculture that degraded the land and polluted the natural environment simply could not sustain its productivity over time. People were also beginning to understand that an agriculture that couldn't meet the needs of society – not just as consumers, but as farmers, rural residents, and people in general – would not be supported by society, and thus, was not sustainable. And, everyone still understood that agriculture had to be profitable, at least periodically, if farmers were to survive financially. So, farming sustainably was about finding balance and harmony among the ecological, economic, and social aspects of farming. Certainly, it was about meeting the needs of the present while leaving opportunities for the future, but to me, it was more just a *common sense* way to farm.

Through my work with a new breed of farmers, I rediscovered the happiness in farming. Most of these new farmers have smaller farming operations than do their conventional, industrial counterparts. Their farms also tend to be more diverse, often integrating crop and livestock production. Many of these farmers market directly to local customers – often to loyal customers whom they know personally. The new crop producers label their products as organic, natural, biodynamic, holistic, ecological, or simply rely on being *local* as a market advantage. These new farmers are set apart from commodity producers, not so much by size, or products, or markets, as by their philosophy of farming and their philosophy of life. The size, products, and markets are simply a reflection of their philosophy. They are farming not just for profits; they are farming for

*Continued on next page*

## The Economics of Happiness

*Continued from previous page*

better overall quality of life, for happiness – and many are finding it.

Over the past five years, I have had the privilege of speaking at 35-40 different venues a year, and most of those were conferences attended by what I call *sustainable* farmers. In truth, we never know for sure whether a farming system is or isn't sustainable, but these farmers balance economic, ecological, and social considerations in their decisions. These conferences range in size from a few dozen people to a few thousand. I never pass up an opportunity to visit with farmers wherever I go, and most of what I know about sustainable farming today, I have learned from farmers.

The new farmers I have met along the way are very different from the farmers I had worked with previously. First, the new farmers are much more diverse with respect to age, gender, education, and income. Second, more families, including children, attend sustainable agriculture conferences, and the whole family participates, often as presenters as well as attendees. Third, these new farmers willingly share ideas and information; they are trying to help each other succeed. Perhaps because of the other differences, these farmers tend to be much more hopeful, if not optimistic, about the future than are their conventional counterparts.

Sustainable farmers are on a new frontier of farming, and life is rarely easy for the pioneers on any frontier. They face many frustrations, and some failures, along the way, because no one really knows how to do what they are doing. But, more and more of these new farmers are finding ways to succeed. These new farmers define success not just in terms of profit, but also in terms of their overall economic, social, and spiritual quality of life. They are putting the fun back in farming; they are finding happiness in farming.

I am not trying to shove the idea of sustainable agriculture down anyone's throat. It really doesn't matter what you call it. As long as it's sustainable, it will

result in a more desirable quality of life. You can call it practical farming, balanced farming, true family farming, or common sense farming, if you don't like the ecological or sustainable labels. Perhaps, the basic ideas would be more acceptable in today's society if we referred to it as farming for the triple bottom line.

The business concept of a triple bottom line first came to widespread attention in corporate management circles in the late 1990s and has since gained in popularity among businesses of all types. Managing for a triple bottom line suggests managing for balance among the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of business perfor-

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*Managing for a triple bottom line suggests managing for balance among the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of business performance, rather than just maximizing profits or growth.*

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mance, rather than just maximizing profits or growth. Triple bottom line managers recognize that businesses lacking social and ecological integrity are not economically viable over the long run; their costs eventually increase and customer loyalty declines. So they focus on conserving nonrenewable resources and protecting the environment, and on being a good neighbor and good corporate citizen, as the means of maintaining long-run profitability.

In many situations, they find that by paying more attention to social and ecological performance, they can actually improve economic performance, even in the short run. They may find ways to transform wastes into economic inputs and to increase production while using fewer costly, nonrenewable resources. They may also find ways to reduce labor costs and create new markets by developing and maintaining better relationships with their workers, their customers, and others in the communities in which they operate. In general, they improve their efficiency in converting ecological and

social resources into economic advantages.

Triple bottom line management has its legitimate skeptics. Businesses have always claimed to be good neighbors and good corporate citizens, but such claims have rarely been allowed to take precedent over maximizing corporate profits. Even Monsanto and DuPont, for example, have "sustainable agriculture" programs. In such cases, the triple bottom line becomes little more than a public relations strategy.

At first, a business strategy based on right relationships may seem a bit naïve or idealistic, but on further thought, it is not. Our first thought may be that our highest priority should be on economics, but further thought will reveal that economics is but a means to a greater end, in business and in life.

Our common sense tells us that wealth does not bring happiness, because happiness requires more than having lots of money to buy lots of *stuff*. Over the long run, economic success must be reconciled with the pursuit of happiness. How can a business possibly sustain its profitability over the long run by any other means than contributing to the happiness of people? How can a family farm possibly be sustained by any other means other than contributing to the happiness of people? Managing for the triple bottom is managing for sustainability, is managing for lasting happiness.

Over the years, I have come to believe that the new sustainable American farmers are lighting the path back to happiness for the rest of us. In the happiness I see in the eyes of these new farm families, I see hope for the future of America. As a nation, we have been working harder, making more money, and buying more *stuff*, but in the process, we have become a nation of increasingly disconnected, unhappy people. To regain our lost sense of happiness, we must make time in our busy lives to restore broken relationships and to explore the purpose and meaning of our lives. We must search for happiness within the context of caring families and communities, in a sense of rightness in our relationships with other people and with

## Membership Directory Additions – Clip & Save

Please welcome these members who have joined or renewed their memberships in NABGA since our directory was published this spring. The list to right is formatted so you can clip or photocopy the page and fasten it into your membership directory. (You may also want to note down the new address for NABGA's Vice President, Tom Walters, which can be found on the back page of this newsletter.)

For a current directory, also visit the "Members Only" section of our new website – very useful if you tend to misplace the printed version!

*If you know growers, researchers, extension specialists, or others who might like to join NABGA, we would be glad to send them sample newsletters and membership applications, either by mail or email.*

the rest of creation.

But first, we must have the courage to challenge conventional economic thinking that "pursuit of wealth" means "pursuit of happiness." Next, we must realize that happiness, in any sense other than hedonistic sensory pleasure, depends on the quality of our personal relationships. Finally, we must understand that happiness is a "by-product" of "right relationships" – not something that we pursue, but instead something that comes to us when we find the courage to do what we know in our heart to be the right and good thing to do.

Working and living sustainably does not require that we live a life of self-sacrifice, but instead, that we live a life of quality – a life of happiness. It is not a sacrifice to care for each other or to care for the earth, these things reflect rightness in our relationships with each other and with the earth, and thus, are necessary for our happiness. Sustainability is not about sacrifice, but instead about happiness. Neither is sustainability about becoming wealthy; instead, it is about living a good life – about being happy. As the new sustainable farmers find ways to make a decent living, while caring for the land and caring for other people, not only

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are they leading the way to a new sustainable food system, they are also showing way for the rest of society to a new economics of happiness.\*

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*This text has been slightly edited. The full version, including footnotes, may be obtained by emailing nabga@mindspring.com.*

## NABGA 2005 Officers and Executive Council

*The regions represented by the members of the Executive Council were redefined at the Association's annual meeting on February 18, 2005. Those districts that are new or changed are marked with an asterisk.*

**President- Ervin Lineberger**, Killdeer Farm, 300 Goforth Rd, Kings Mt., NC 28086, phone 704-739-6602, e-mail fruitgrower@netzero.net.

**Vice President- Tom Walters**, Northwest Washington Research and Extension Center, 16550 State Rte 536, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, phone 360-848-6124, e-mail twalters@wsu.edu.

**Executive Secretary & Treasurer- Debby Wechsler**, 1138 Rock Rest Rd. Pittsboro, NC 27312, phone 919-542-3687, fax 919-548-4037, e-mail nabga@mindspring.com.

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### Regional Representatives

**Region 1** (Represents all of Canada). Open seat. To nominate someone or volunteer for this position, contact NABGA.

**Region 2** (Represents CT, NH, MA, ME, RI & VT) **Nate Nourse**, Nourse Farms, 41 River Rd., South Deerfield, MA 01373, phone 413-665-2658, e-mail info@noursefarms.com.

**\*Region 3** (Represents MI, NJ, NY, PA, Europe, and South Africa), **Dena Fiacchino**, Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3288 Main St. Mexico, NY 13114, 315-963-7286 ext 203, e-mail: dcf25@cornell.edu

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**Region 8** (Represents AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HA, MT, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY, Mexico, Central & South America)

## Use Your NABGA Representatives

These elected representatives are eager to serve you, our members. Please contact the representative from your region, our at-large member, or any of NABGA's officers with your ideas and concerns. Let them know about bramble-related events, activities, and issues in your area. Work together with them to help build NABGA's presence in your region and to develop regional projects. They want to hear from you!

*How about a prize for the region that experiences the most membership growth in 2005-2006?*



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