

# **Global Berry Congress**

Peter Mcpherson  
Berry Exchange

Project Number: BB09005

## **BB09005**

This report is published by Horticulture Australia Ltd to pass on information concerning horticultural research and development undertaken for the blueberry industry.

The research contained in this report was funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd with the financial support of Australian Blueberry Growers Association Inc.

All expressions of opinion are not to be regarded as expressing the opinion of Horticulture Australia Ltd or any authority of the Australian Government.

The Company and the Australian Government accept no responsibility for any of the opinions or the accuracy of the information contained in this report and readers should rely upon their own enquiries in making decisions concerning their own interests.

ISBN 0 7341 2346 9

Published and distributed by:  
Horticulture Australia Ltd  
Level 7  
179 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Telephone: (02) 8295 2300  
Fax: (02) 8295 2399

© Copyright 2010



*Know-how for Horticulture™*

# **Global Berry Congress, May 2010**

Peter McPherson  
Australian Blueberry Growers Association (ABGA)

Project Number: BB09005

**Final Report**



**HAL Project Number:** BB09005

**Project Title:** Global Berry Congress, May 2010

**Research Provider:** Berry Exchange

**Project Leader:** Peter McPherson

**Report Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010

This report presents an overview of the Global Berry Congress held in London, England May 2010.

***Disclaimer:***

*Any recommendations contained in this publication do not necessarily represent HAL Limited policy.*

*No person should act on the basis of the contents of this publication, whether as to matters of fact or opinion or other content, without first obtaining specific, independent professional advice in respect of the matters set out in this publication.*

**Acknowledgement:**

This report is published by Horticulture Australia Ltd to pass on information concerning horticultural research and development undertaken for the blueberry industry.

The research contained in this report was funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd with the financial support of Australian Blueberry Growers Association (ABGA).

All expressions of opinion are not to be regarded as expressing the opinion of Horticulture Australia Ltd or any authority of the Australian Government.

The Company and the Australian Government accept no responsibility for any of the opinions or the accuracy of the information contained in this report and readers should rely upon their own enquiries in making decisions concerning their own interests.

## Media Summary

The Global Berry Congress was held in London on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Peter McPherson of BerryExchange, and also Treasurer of the Australian Blueberry Growers Association ("ABGA") attended the conference on behalf of the Australian Blueberry Industry to gain a more informed insight of global development & opportunities that could be applied in growing the Australian Berry business & market.

The exciting message that all soft fruit has experienced strong growth over the past decade with berries growing fourfold in the period 2001-2010 was delivered at the Congress.

More than 250 delegates attended the conference, which featured a wide range of guest speakers on issues such as:

- Marketing initiatives and consumer trends
- The latest research and development in a number of fields encouraging the next generation into the industry
- Trends in the Global Berry world market

The conference's keynote speakers were from around the world, with all major growing regions represented.

## **Results/ Discussions**

- The Congress brought together the berry industry leaders from backgrounds / expertise, such as breeding, production, food safety, promotion, marketing, wholesale, retail etc. It was attended by over 250 representatives of the leading global berry industry members.
- The conference topics outlined the Global Berry Industry's trends, threats and opportunities, and those present also heard from various speakers with expertise in berry production, technology advancement, marketing and consumer trends that will have application in the Australian industry into the future.

Conference topics included:

### **The Shape of the Global Berry Market**

- Presentations were made on industry and consumer trends in the U.S., in particular as they relate to value, consumers and demographics, and also outlined year on year trends within the produce department, given the impact of the GFC. The actual berry category performance was also broken down by berry product in the same period.
- In addition, the U.K. market experience was highlighted and this was underpinned by a presentation supported by data collection from 25,000 Great Britain homes which utilised a scanning device called "Shopandscan", a new Market Research Survey tool measuring the purchasing patterns of householders around Great Britain. This looked in particular at grocery price inflation on a year on year basis, shopper reaction and in particular how soft fruits performed in the said period of 2001-2010. The underlying conclusion was that soft fruits have experienced strong growth with expenditure more than doubling in the 9 year scan period.

A very positive sign was that berries grew fourfold in that same period.

- It also looked at Key Performance Indicators for berries and aligned them with demographic areas to see how each of the individual berry products performed.
- Highlighted in the information was sales impact, in times of promotion and non-promotion which really emphasised the benefit of promotional activities on a week to week basis.

### **Meeting Fresh Challenges for Berry Production**

- This was an in-depth presentation by Cort Brazelton of Fall Creek Nursery in Oregon, U.S., a company well known to most blueberry growers in Australia.

The major berry growing areas in the world were highlighted as to their seasonality, volume by production, and production growth prospects going forward.

- The over-riding theme was where the industry was heading, in particular in countries such as South America where poor decision making in fast-tracking huge new production areas has led to over-saturation in the marketplace brought on by :
  - unstable and unpredictable supply systems
  - ill-advised varietal selection
  - logistical limitationsThe end result is a poor quality reputation in the eyes of the consumer in the intended markets. This has sent many growers to the wall in South America.
- It also pointed out the poor marketing of product by the number of exporters involved in trying to move the product as against a single desk or greater consolidation in marketing of the South American product.

### **Fresh Development in Berry Technology**

- Further sessions involved new developments in berry technology, berry packaging and also in berry production. This included a detailed outline of the Scottish Crop Research Institute ("SCRI") breeding program and how they have gone about a Joint Venture growing business opportunity in China. In particular, the presentation gave an outline of the ways that SCRI went about protecting their plant variety rights, given China's poor reputation of I.P. protection.

### **The Final Presentations**

- These were based on marketing for success in the Global Berry business for which there were presentations from the South American growers who have formed a group called "Blueberries From The South" and represent berry growers in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. This was based on a strategy to overcome the poor investment decisions outlined above.
- This group encompasses growers covering 18,000 Ha of planted blueberries and represents 80% of total exports from the Southern Hemisphere. Their season runs from September through to May, and their commitment was to:
  - promote blueberries, identifying long term growth and market development, supporting retail distribution

- exchange information in their regions and with the entire chain
- raise awareness that increased volumes in the future will need the collaboration and support of the entire chain
- the development of a generic promotional program which, to my mind, was not unlike what we have already successfully utilized in the Australian domestic Blueberry market.

A presentation in the Marketing arena, from a Category Manager of one of the U.K.'s largest supermarket chains, ASDA, looked at:

- customer behaviour
- the focus that ASDA puts on customers
- the customer actually dictating the way that ASDA goes about selling their products to get positive customer behaviour and repeat buying.

It also looked at the key influences of what you buy in the berry category. The conclusions in order of importance were:

- first and foremost, price
- quality
- seasonality
- support for home grown product

The influence of packaging and actual pack size, and the reasons why price moves due to seasonality were also subjects covered in the presentation.

The final presentation from one of the USA largest grower / marketer growing groups, Naturipe Farms, outlined the following:

- Driving Forces in Today's Market Place
- Imperatives to a Successful Berry Industry – (Value, Velocity & Viability)
- What do Consumers Want?
- Consumer Berry Buyer Habits
- Berry Market Development Index
- Promotional / Marketing Tools

## **Recommendations / Industry Communication**

- This Report will be published in the next ABGA Journal so that all members will receive an update of the Berry Congress presentations. There will also be an overview of the conference given at the next ABGA Conference in October 2010, in Tasmania.
- Links to all the papers presented at the Congress will be made available to members of the ABGA.



# Global Berry Congress

12 May 2010/ London  
www.berrycongress.com

## Programme\*

Hilton Tower Bridge Hotel,  
London

### **07:30 - 08:45**

Registration and networking refreshments

### **08:45 - 09:00**

Welcome to Global Berry Congress  
Laurence Olins, Chairman, British Summer Fruits  
(UK)

### **09:00 - 10:30**

Session no. 1

#### **The shape of the global berry market**

Berry sales continue to grow in Europe and the United States, the world's two major consumer markets for fresh berries. What is the shape of the market? And is this sales growth sustainable?

Speakers:

Bruce Axtman, Perishables Group (USA)  
Ed Garner, Kantar Worldpanel (UK)

### **10:30 - 11:30**

Networking break

### **11:30 - 13:00**

Session no. 2

#### **Meeting fresh challenges for berry production**

Berry growers in major supplying countries all over the world are faced by fresh series of challenges. What are some of the issues that the berry sector now has to face? And how can growers tackle these challenges head-on?

Speakers:

Cort Brazelton, Fall Creek Farm & Nursery Inc  
(USA)

### **13:00 - 14:00**

Networking lunch

### **14:00 - 15:30**

Session no. 3

#### **Global Berry Congress breakout sessions**

Breakout session no. 1

Fresh developments in berry technology

Breakout session no. 2

Fresh developments in berry packaging

Mark Tollman, Sharp Interpack (UK)

Breakout session no. 3

Fresh developments in berry production

Dr. Nigel Kerby, Mylnefield Research Services  
(UK)

### **15:30 - 16:30**

Networking break

### **16:30 - 18:00**

Session no. 4

#### **Marketing for success in the global berry business**

Berry marketing is becoming ever more sophisticated. And more fresh berries destined for export are now available from more countries all over the world. What marketing strategies work best? And where are the next big sources for berries?

Speakers:

Lianne Jones, Blueberries from the South (Chile)  
Andy Jackson, ASDA (UK)

### **18:30 - 21:00**

Global Berry Congress Gala Cocktail at London's Living Room – City Hall  
Hosted by British Summer Fruits

\* Last updated: 10 MARCH 2010 Please note: this is a provisional programme and is subject to change. Names of speakers and panellists will be confirmed as they become available.

