

New Brunswick Wild Blueberry Industry

Strategic Plan



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Bleuets NB Blueberries

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AUTHORIZATION

This NB Wild Blueberry Industry Strategic Plan was developed through industry wide consultations organized by Bleuets NB Blueberries. The Board of Directors of Bleuets NB Blueberries approves the content of this plan and strongly supports its implementation.

Bleuets NB Blueberries Board of Directors

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INTRODUCTION

In New Brunswick, wild blueberries have been harvested commercially from native stands for well over 60 years. During this period the industry has grown dramatically, climbing from a production of 1.5 million kg in the 1970s to a record of 15 million kg in 2008; with a farm gate value of \$25 million. The production base has climbed from 2300 ha to 12000 ha in the same time period. Much of that growth has occurred in the past twenty years and has largely taken place on crown land leases. New Brunswick is one of the few areas that still has a considerable suitable land base for further expansion. The industry is composed of more than 300 commercial blueberry producers.

Global markets for frozen wild blueberries have grown steadily to keep pace with expanded production in Maine and eastern Canada. New Brunswick currently adds value to about a third of its production. The remainder is sold to out of province processors.

In 2006, the industry reorganized itself as an agency, Bleuets NB Blueberries, under the NB Natural Products Act. This organization now provides a united voice for the industry and undertakes to address many of the strategic issues facing this growing industry.

In the fall of 2008, Bleuets NB Blueberries was asked by the NB Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture to undertake a strategic planning process with the blueberry industry to develop a vision and plan for the further strengthening and development of the NB wild blueberry industry over the next five to ten years. The following document is the result of that exercise.

This plan is a bit unique for a Strategic Plan. Normally a Strategic plan is developed by an organization for the sole purpose of guiding the future activities of that organization. This strategic plan is not a Bleuets NB Blueberries strategic plan or a strategic plan for the NB Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture. It is a plan developed by the industry itself, but one that will require the participation and cooperation of many agencies in order to implement successfully.

This plan lays out the vision that NB blueberry growers have for their industry, and identifies the issues that must be addressed if that vision is to be realized. The plan is a five-year plan. Because it is an industry plan and not an organizational plan, there is no mission statement, but there is a very clear vision that industry has articulated for its future.

INDUSTRY VISION

While ensuring the production of a safe, healthy and environmentally-friendly crop, together, the wild blueberries producers of New Brunswick are operating within a financial, policy and market environment conducive to their success and expansion..... the result of which comes from: strong partnerships with industry stakeholders and partners; secure access to adequate capital; and a strong domestic and global market.

Producers have created an environment in which they and their successors can thrive and prosper.

KEY ISSUES IMPACTING THE VIABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NB BLUEBERRY INDUSTRY

From the input received at the regional kitchen meetings and the SWOT analysis conducted by the delegates at the provincial roundtable, the major issues impacting the industry today were consolidated under the six following categories and are presented as 19 key issues.

1. Productivity
 - a. Research support
 - b. Technology transfer
 - c. Pollination
 - d. Wildlife damage
 - e. Theft losses and trespass damage
 - f. Access to commercial fields
2. Industry Growth
 - a. Crown land availability
 - b. Adding value
 - c. Future growers
3. Financing
 - a. Adequate, appropriate and dependable financing mechanisms
 - b. Business management skills
4. Markets
 - a. Price stability
 - b. Market competition
 - c. Growing the market
5. Labour
6. Environment

Productivity Issues

There is still a tremendous opportunity to raise the productivity on wild blueberry fields. The planning group set a target of 4,000 lb/acre average yields within 10 years.

- i. *Research Support.* There are still many, and ever changing, technological questions that need answers in order to improve productivity and viability
- ii. *Technology Transfer.* The industry needs rapid access to new technology and continuous upgrading opportunities. Technology transfer and service requests are changing and include such areas as: internet access, business and crop management tools and training, precision farming technology, small equipment options, land development protocols, blight hotline, etc.
- iii. *Pollination.* Pollination remains a key limiting factor in raising productivity. A comprehensive approach is needed to make progress on this issue. The planning group set a target of 60,000 pollination units within 5 years.
- iv. *Wildlife Control.* Wildlife predation appears to be an increasing problem (deer, bear, birds). Increasing costs of production and producer investments are making losses a very serious issue.
- v. *Theft and Trespass.* As with wildlife losses, the industry can not continue to sustain serious losses from crop theft and from field damage due to trespassing.
- vi. *Access to commercial fields.* Designated roads policy needs changed to ensure that roads to commercial activities are maintained (grading of roads prior to harvest, brush cutting along roads, keeping roads passable for emergency vehicles).

Industry Growth Issues

While world markets are hard to predict in the long term, there is a strong industry position that the New Brunswick wild blueberry industry should continue to develop to its potential; and improve its market share in the wild blueberry industry.

- vii. Existing NB producers need the opportunity to expand their enterprises to reach scales of production that will be viable in the long term.
- viii. Industry recognizes that NB is not realizing enough added value from the blueberry sector in terms of economic activity and employment; and that investment is needed in NB for value-added enterprises and other support services.
- ix. Family succession is an emerging issue as producers age. Inadequate financing options and fluctuating market returns make it difficult to retain family members. The inability to resolve this issue will mean more industry consolidation.

Financing and Business Management Issues

- x. The long term development requirements of blueberry enterprises requires specialized long-term financing. Unless adequate and appropriate financing

programs are in place, small and medium sized blueberry producers will not be able to take advantage of crown land and other development opportunities.

- xi. Traditional financing institutions do not understand or have faith in the blueberry sector, making both long-term and operating line financing difficult to secure.
- xii. Many blueberry producers would benefit from better business management skills and information.

Markets and Market Return Issues

- xiii. Fluctuating and inadequate market prices are making it very difficult for producers to plan, to secure financing and to remain viable.
- xiv. Consolidation and cooperation within the processing sector has reduced meaningful competition for blueberries at the farm gate.
- xv. Producers need to maximize the returns from their farm enterprises, including secondary income streams such as compensation for ecological goods and services, and renewable energy initiatives.
- xvi. Market opportunities within the province are being under-served and under-developed
- xvii. To maintain strong demand for our product, strong global market development efforts must be continued.

Labour Issue

- xviii. The inability to secure enough seasonal labour continues to be a major problem for blueberry producers throughout the province.

Environment Issue

- xix. To retain public and government support for the sector, the industry needs to position itself as a green, environmentally-conscious industry producing a healthy, natural product while being excellent stewards of NB resources.

Table 1. NB Wild Blueberry Industry Strategic Plan: Objectives and Strategic Actions

| Issue Category | Goals/Objectives | Strategic Action | Responsibility | Time Line | Priority |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Productivity - Research | Have researchers addressing priority issues of NB producers | BNBB Research Comm. establish priorities through annual producer consultations, and seek research funding and support Maximize research efforts by using industry funds to leverage research dollars in priority areas | BNBB Res. Com. With DAA BNBB | On-going On-going | 1 2 |
| | Have access to research results from all wild blueberry producing areas | Charge new Canadian Wild Blueberry Research Institute with responsibility to gather and disseminate research results from all areas, including Maine and Quebec | BNBB | Dec 2009 | 1 |
| | Rapid dissemination and discussion of research results | Provide adequate opportunities for discussion of research results in quarterly newsletters, regional sessions, field days etc | DAA - BNBB | On-going | 1 |
| Productivity – Technology Transfer | Producers keeping up to date or taking advantage of training opportunities Producers having access to necessary training and updates, and the opportunity to exchange ideas and experience | Request Dept Environment, in consultation with DAA, to implement upgrading and refresher requirements for pesticide applicators Provide more opportunities for training, technology transfer and the exchange of ideas | BNBB – DAA, Environment DAA - BNBB | May 2009 On-going | 2 2 |
| | | Provide more information on small equipment options and usage | DAA - BNBB | July 2009, on-going | 1 |
| Productivity - Pollination | A greatly expanded and healthy pollination services sector in NB | Support Bee Keepers efforts to obtain industry assistance for redevelopment Develop a model and recommendations for producer-owned pollination units | BNBB, DAA, CHC, AAFC DAA | 2009 2010-2011 | 2 1 |

| Issue Category | Goal/Objective | Strategic Action | Responsibility | Time Line | Priority |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | Fully implement the proposed Dispute Settlement Mechanism with Beekeepers | Pollination Com - NBBKA | 2009 | 2 |
| | | Ensure timely information exchange with pollination services sector (inventories, requirements, etc) | DAA –NBBKA Pollination com. | 2010 | 2 |
| | | Work closely with cranberry industry and NB beekeepers on development issues | Pollination Com | 2010 | 2 |
| | Increase effectiveness and capacity of native pollinators in blueberry fields | Support/undertake research on the management of native pollinators in blueberry fields | DAA – BNBB – WBRI, NSAC research chair | 2009 | 1 |
| | | Develop best management practices for maximizing native pollinators in blueberries | DAA, NSAC research chair | 2012 | 1 |
| | To maximize the effectiveness of commercial pollinators in NB blueberry fields | Undertake research and develop best management practices for honeybees, leafcutter bees and bumble bees in blueberry fields | DAA – NSAC, WBRI , BNBB | 2012 | 1 |
| | | Establish higher hive-strength standards for honeybee rental units | BBNB-NBBKA, DAA | 2010 | 1 |
| Productivity – Wildlife Control | Appropriate and adequate programs, permits and regulatory support to effectively control deer, bear and birds | Establish effective protocols through an industry, DAA and DNR working group, and an industry-DAA-Natural Resources Canada working group | BNBB, DAA, DNR, NRC | 2009 | 1 |
| | | Provide producers with clear information on wildlife removal protocols | BNBB | 2010 | 3 |

| Issue Category | Goal/Objective | Strategic Action | Responsibility | Time Line | Priority |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Productivity – Theft & Trespassing | A significant reduction on crop losses due to theft and vehicular damage in blueberry fields | Prepare a review and assessment of the issue | BNBB-producers | 2009 | 2 |
| | | Explore options with appropriate organizations: Public Safety, RCMP, DNR | BNBB-DAA | 2010 | 2 |
| | | Start a campaign with buyers to verify the source of supply, before purchasing berries | BNBB | 2009 | 1 |
| Productivity – Road access | A designated road policy that ensures efficient and safe access to commercial blueberry enterprises | Work with DOT to change the current operating policies, and gain political support for change | BBNB | 2010 | 2 |
| | | | | | |
| Industry Growth – Access to Crown Land | A smooth, consistent and timely process to identify and transfer crown land with high blueberry development potential | Gain strong political support for blueberry industry development, and a ‘highest and best use policy’ for allocating crown land | BNBB, Minister of Agriculture, DNR | 2009 | 1 |
| | | Continue to work with DNR to identify and commit crown land for blueberry development throughout the province | DAA | 2009 | 1 |
| | | DNR to provide lists of recent cuts, in strategic areas, to DAA and to industry for assessment prior to scarification | DAA - BNBB | 2009 | 1 |
| | Have an allocation policy which firstly benefits existing blueberry producers, and encourages maximum value for NB | Develop a crown land allocation policy which allows NB producers to grow and encourages retention of value in NB | BNBB - DAA | 2010 | 1 |
| | | Develop a more open process for the sale and transfer of leases, which allows all individuals the opportunity to negotiate on available land | DAA - BNBB | 2011 | 3 |
| | Realistic development protocols with realistic development costs | Develop in cooperation with DAA, DNR and DOE workable land development protocols | DAA - BNBB | 2010 | 1 |

| Issue Category | Goal/Objective | Strategic Action | Responsibility | Time Line | Priority |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Industry Growth – Value-Added | Grow the value of the industry in NB by adding more value to the crop in the province | Open discussions with the cranberry industry to investigate ways to work together and add value to these two fruit crops Encourage and financially support value-added initiatives and enterprises which will add value to the NB blueberry industry | BNBB DAA (ADB), BNB | 2010, on-going On-going | 2 2 |
| Industry Growth – Family Succession | Have an environment which encourages and facilitates the retention of farm youth in the industry | Ensure that the goals and strategic actions under financing and market returns are met | BNBB, DAA | 2013 | 1 |
| | | Undertake efforts to improve the image of the industry | BNBB | 2011 | 2 |
| Financing | Have access to adequate and appropriate financing mechanisms to allow for land and enterprise development by small and medium sized producers | Redesign the Perennial Crop Establishment Loan and the New Land Lease programs to provide appropriate financing for development on both private and crown lands | DAA-BNBB | 2009 | 1 |
| | Have a level playing field re development programming with other blueberry provinces | Gather information on development programming in the other provinces and seek equivalent levels of support | BNBB | 2010 | 3 |
| | Have an effective crop insurance program for wild blueberries | Assess the current programs and options and work with DAA and CHC re improvements | BNBB – CHC, DAA | 2011 | 2 |
| | Assist producers with their production and business planning, and in their dealing with financial agencies | Undertake an Atlantic or Maritime study to establish benchmarks and templates for wild blueberry costs of production and development costs | BNBB, WBPANS, PEIBGA, ACAAFF | 2009-2010 | 1 |
| | | Revamp Farm Credit Canada business management software to fit blueberry enterprises, and train producers in its use | BNBB - FCC | 2009 | 2 |

| Issue Category | Goal/Objective | Strategic Action | Responsibility | Time Line | Priority |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------|
| Markets Returns | Develop and institute a mechanism to stabilize prices and to ensure that producers get a fair share of market returns | Undertake discussions with the QE, NS, PE and ME blueberry producer organizations re interest in pursuing this objective collectively | BNBB | 2009-2010 | 1 |
| | Maximize all possible income streams from blueberry enterprises | Support efforts to return value to producers for ecological goods and services; and to support producers in bio-energy initiatives | BBNB | On-going | 3 |
| | | | | | |
| Markets | Develop new domestic market opportunities for NB producers | Work with WBPANS on domestic promotion efforts | BNBB | 2010 | 2 |
| | | Develop a list of fresh/frozen pack producers for dissemination to stores and to the public | DAA - BNBB | 2009 | 2 |
| | Continue to expand world market demand for wild blueberries | Continue to support the work of WBANA | BNBB | On-going | 1 |
| | | | | | |
| Labour | Improve the labour availability problem for NB blueberry producers | Engage the appropriate federal and prov. agencies to explore mechanisms to allow more seniors, social assistance and employment insurance recipients to work without losing benefits | Alliance, BNBB, DAA | 2011 | 2 |
| | | Become engaged with and contribute information to the various labour pool initiatives in the province | Alliance -BNBB | 2010 | 2 |
| | | Work closely with the CHC committee currently studying this issue | BNBB | 2009 | 2 |
| Environment | To be, and to be seen as, excellent stewards of NB resources and its environment | Develop a public awareness plan promoting industry efforts at good environmental stewardship | BNBB - Alliance | 2010 | 2 |
| | | Develop an industry emergency response plan | BNBB | 2009 | 2 |
| | | Train and encourage producers to adopt environmental friendly practices | DAA-BNBB | On-going | 2 |

Appendices

Appendix 1. NB Blueberry Industry SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis was conducted by the delegates to the provincial roundtable on January 27-28, 2009.

Strengths

- Strong market demand for healthy, wild and natural blueberries
- A lot of expertise in the northeastern blueberry industry, developed over the past 60 years
- A united and organized industry (BNBB, WBANA)
- A united approach to marketing
- Competitive with other fruit
- Tenacious and progressive producers
- Good use of IPM practices
- Our natural land base, the crop can not be grown everywhere

Weaknesses

- Slow and difficult process to get crown land for development
- Fluctuating returns (price and production)
- Almost complete reliance on mother nature and processors
- Lack of public awareness about the industry and its efforts to provide good land stewardship
- The shortage of seasonal labour
- The shrinking of government support services, particularly specialty services
- Still many technology questions, best management questions
- Very little value-added to NB production in NB
- No producer input or control in pricing
- Lack of access to adequate and appropriate financing
- Shortage of pollinators
- Lack of support to control theft and damage from trespassing

Opportunities

- Development of new value-added products
- Synergistic partnerships with the cranberry industry
- Still a virtually untapped global market for blueberries
- Land base exists to greatly expand production
- Still tremendous opportunity to raise average productivity
- Domestic market still underdeveloped
- Major opportunity to grow the pollination services sector

Appendices

Appendix 1. NB Blueberry Industry SWOT Analysis - continued

- To enhance the image and reputation of the industry and its product by highlighting its green, environmentally responsible, natural, wild and healthy attributes

Threats

- Rapid global increase in cultivated blueberry production
- Processors are too consolidated, not enough open competition for product
- Environmental requirements, regulations and standards keep changing
- Urban encroachment, not sufficient right-to-farm protection
- No industry emergency response plan in place (food safety, environment)
- Climate change (constant shifts in pest and disease pressures)
- Wildlife predation (deer, bear, birds)
- Unstable health and viability of the honeybee industry
- Access to capital
- Generational transfer issues (viability, financing)

Appendices

Appendix 2. Summary of Issues from Regional Kitchen Meetings

The following is a consolidated summary of issues identified by producers at three Regional Kitchen meetings held in November, 2008.

1. Production research

Research areas requested:

- Double cropping
- Predator management
 - Deer
 - Waterfowl
- Enhancing native pollinators
- Better equipment solutions for small scale operations
- Better technology for burning (efficiency, safety)
- Cost of production analysis. Cost of development analysis. Cost Benefit analysis on new land development.

- Better and more immediate access to existing research results from Eastern NA, including Maine and Quebec
- More discussion opportunities around the impact and utilization of research results
- More industry input into research priorities (active BBNB research committee)

Issues: There are clear research needs that producers have identified. There is a concern that current research results are not being disseminated quickly enough or explained clearly enough. Input into research priority setting is important.

2. Training and technology transfer

- Rural access to high speed internet
- Better and more immediate access to existing research results from Eastern NA, including Maine and Quebec
- Pesticide certification training – better communications of opportunities
- Environmental Farm Plans
 - Clarify access to available programs
 - A role of BBNB or the Alliance?
- FCC Field and Crop Management software – adapted for blueberries
- Training on types of pollinators and enhancing native pollinators
- More information, advice and training is required on equipment options
- More information, advice and training are required on technologies like GPS, crop and business management software, etc.
- Would like to see more DAA expertise on equipment

Appendices

Appendix 2. Summary of Issues from Regional Kitchen Meetings – cont'd

- Would like practical presentations/demonstrations on producer-designed solutions to equipment challenges (Rube Goldberg, McGyver solutions)
- More on-farm visits by DAA staff
- More weather stations in the regions
- More information sessions, tail gate meetings, etc
- Blueberry production short courses for beginner and advanced growers are needed
- Clearer recommendations on new land development protocols
- Need a NB blight hotline service

Issues: Producers would always like more extension and advisory services, but many of their requests reflect changing times: internet access, immediate access to research, business and crop management tools and training, GPS, small equipment options, blight hotline, etc.

3. Industry expansion/ Access to crown land

- Push for a 'highest and best use' policy for Crown Lands
- Removal of crown land management from Natural Resources
- Crown land application process time is very excessive
- More open and transparent system for advertising and allocating available crown land
- More land is needed to achieve economies of scale and enterprise viability for many producers
- Preference should be given to existing producers (NB residents), not to large companies (processors).
- Need better right to farm legislation to protect enterprises from urban encroachment
- Need to support and encourage more local processing or value added activity
- Access to Crown land and allocation policy should be a major priority for BNBB

Issues: The current access barriers to crown land for blueberry development are unacceptable. New land is needed to allow current producers to develop viable farm units. Current NB producers should have first access to new land allocations. Urban encroachment is an increasing problem.

4. Financing production and enterprise (land) development

- Gov't should focus on existing producers who want to expand vs. completely new entities
- New Land Purchase program should be revitalized
- Revamp Perennial Crop Establishment Loan Program (Programme de prêts pour l'établissement de cultures vivaces) to include crown land

Appendices

Appendix 2. Summary of Issues from Regional Kitchen Meetings – cont'd

- Need more work/information on blueberry production COP and economic returns is needed to support financing requests by producers
- Banks very reluctant to participate with short or long term financing
- FCC is only game in town
- Assistance/financing programs are needed to help finance land development and equipment costs aimed at industry expansion.

Issues: Third party enterprise/financial models are needed to assist growers in securing financing. Appropriate, adequate and consistent financing tools are needed to facilitate development.

5. Pollination and pollination services

- More training on types of pollinators
- More research and information on enhancing native pollinators
 - Habitat management
 - Pesticide use impacts
- Fully implement the Dispute Settlement Mechanism with the NB Beekeepers Assoc.
- Need more timely information in the spring on the pollinator strength, inventories, availability and suppliers
- Should generate a producer requirement inventory every fall, for the benefit of the pollination services industry
- Financial support for apiary or pollination services expansion
- Concerns about the rapidly increasing cost of pollinators
- Blueberry industry should be working closely with cranberry industry to address pollination issues.

Issues: A comprehensive program is needed which incorporates the many diverse components identified above. Clearer medium and long term goals are needed to properly scope the scale of this issue.

6. Marketing/Promotion

- Educate consumers – where to source wild blueberries
- DAA should expand marketing efforts/ work with BBNB
- International marketing efforts by WBANA should be balanced with more in-province domestic promotion

Issue: Market opportunities within the province are being under-serviced and under-developed.

Appendices

Appendix 2. Summary of Issues from Regional Kitchen Meetings – cont'd

7. Labour Shortages

- How to attract seniors
- How to utilize people on UI or SA without hurting benefits
- Need creative solutions to attracting workers (fund raising initiatives, etc)

Issue: Creative solutions and supportive policy are needed to address the labour issue.

8. Crop and land protection

- Need better police and legislative support to control theft and trespassing
- More public awareness of land use issues and regulations

Issue: Theft and trespassing continues to be a serious issue for the industry. The scale of losses may be growing.

9. Blueberry Prices

- Need to investigate ways of stabilizing the price from year to year

Issue: Fluctuating prices is making it very difficult for producers to plan, to secure financing and to remain viable.

10. Government programs/policy impacting the blueberry industry

• Transportation

- Maintenance of roads with commercial activity (grading of roads prior to harvest, brush cutting along roads, keeping roads passable for emergency vehicles)
- Harmonize provincial regulations re permits for farm vehicles
- Exempt farm machinery from weekend transfer restrictions
- Farm plates?

Issue: Designated roads policy needs changed to ensure that roads to commercial activities are maintained. Other points may need broader agricultural industry support to effect change.

• Natural Resources

- Highest and Best Use policy needed for Crown Lands
- Need more common sense Burning Permit guidelines –
 - i. currently not working
 - ii. not enough DNR staff in field for guidelines to work
- Need better deer and wildlife control measures (more doe licenses in SW, funds for fencing)

Issue: Need a standing BNBB- DNR-DAA working group to address industry issues. Need political support to realize policy change at DNR

Appendices

Appendix 2. Summary of Issues from Regional Kitchen Meetings – cont'd

- **Agriculture**

- Make more information and training on irrigation available
- Blueberry crop insurance needs to be fine tuned to address differences between developing and mature fields; and intensity of pollinators.
- CAIS/ Agri-Stability program needs to be modified??
- More information, training, research on pollination and equipment
- Expand/improve domestic marketing program
- More information, information sessions and extension services for blueberry industry in general
- Need more agricultural economics and equipment engineering expertise applied to the blueberry industry

Issues: Industry needs are changing, and growers need different types of technical resources, training and risk management tools.

- **Business New Brunswick**

- More Agriculture (DAA) control of farm financing programs
- Better access to New Land Purchase program (Programme d'achat de nouvelles terres)
- Revamp Perennial Crop Establishment Loan Program (Programme de prêts pour l'établissement de cultures vivaces) to include crown land
- Support for small scale processing and value-added initiatives

Issue: Current financial programs are structured to fit government protocols, but not to meet the needs of industry.

- **Environment**

- Ensure that blueberry issues and challenges are kept in mind when setting new environmental policy

- **Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour**

- How can we benefit from, or link to Community Colleges?
- More financial support (bursaries) is needed to encourage more high school graduates to attend NSAC
- More business management training
- Need to get more people/institutions working on blueberry issues (production and sustainability research, business management, dieticians)
- Need blueberry industry economic impact research
- Need to be able to utilize people on UI or SA without hurting benefits

Issue: Industry is not clear on how to effectively utilize post secondary institutions, but feel that they are an under-utilized resource in the province.

Appendices

Appendix 3. NB Wild Blueberry Industry Strategic Planning Process

1. Regional Kitchen Meetings were held during the month of November in St George, Moncton and Tracadie-Sheila. A total of 65 producers participated. The sessions were organized around 5-6 person discussion groups where producers were asked to identify issues impacting the health of the NB blueberry industry. A summary of those meetings is provided in Appendix 2.

At these meetings 5 delegates from each region were appointed (3 BNBB directors and 2 at-large) to participate in a provincial roundtable.

2. Provincial Roundtable was held January 27-28, 2009, with the 15 delegates selected at the regional meetings. At the roundtable, participants were asked to develop an industry Vision, conduct an industry SWOT analysis (Appendix 1), establish goals and identify strategic actions needed to realize those goals.

3. A Draft Document was prepared and circulated to all Roundtable participants for their review and suggested revisions. A second Draft was prepared and reviewed by the full Board of Bleuets NB Blueberries on February 13.

4. A Draft Final was prepared for review and approval of the Board in March.