

## **GROWN IN WASHINGTON BLUEBERRIES – 2012**

### **BLUEBERRY HISTORY**

- wild blueberries have been around for over 13,000 years
- cultivated blueberries have been around since the early 1900's
- cultivated blueberries are a hybrid of the highbush blueberry that is plump, sweet, and easy to pick

### **HOW BLUEBERRIES GROW**

- highbush blueberries are planted in long rows
- bushes can grow up to 12 feet tall, but most are around 6 feet tall
- blueberries develop white flower blossoms in the spring, which are then pollinated by bees
- each blossom develops into a blueberry
- the berry starts out hard and green, then to a reddish color and finally to a blue with a silver sheen
- blueberries are picked either by hand or by machine

### **NUTRITION**

- 80 fat free calories per cup of blueberries
- an excellent source of dietary fiber and vitamin C
- high in antioxidants, which protect against cancer, heart disease, and other age related diseases
- help prevent urinary tract infections

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

- WA state ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in 2007 blueberry production
- WA state yields 8,000 pounds of blueberries per acre
- this computes to a value of \$13,421 per acre
- total value of the WA state crop was \$49.6 million
- blueberry production is on the rise in WA state
- in 2010, there were 9,480 acres of blueberries in WA
- projections put WA as the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest state in blueberry production in 2010, trailing only Michigan
- Whatcom county leads the state with 3,500 acres of blueberries
- traditionally blueberries are a Western WA crop, however many new plantings have taken place in Eastern WA