

Oregon Blueberries

AT A GLANCE

Blueberry Benefits

Economic, Social, Environmental

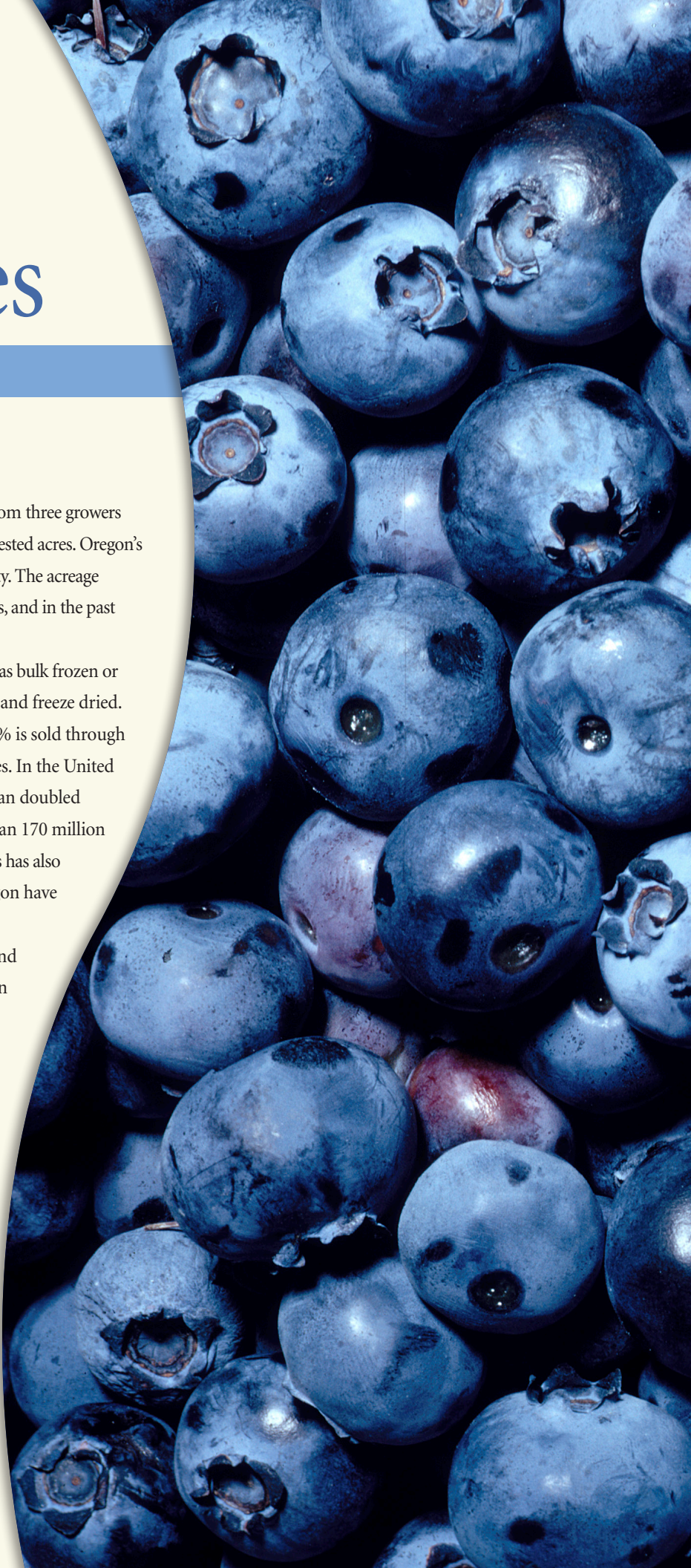
Oregon's successful blueberry production has risen from three growers with fewer than 50 acres in 1954 to today's 6,770 harvested acres. Oregon's soils and climate produce berries of exceptional quality. The acreage planted to blueberries has increased steadily since the mid-1970s, and in the past decade has increased by more than 75%.

Based on 2008 data, 60% of the blueberry crop is processed as bulk frozen or individually quick-frozen berries. Blueberries are also puréed and freeze dried. A small portion of the crop becomes juice. Approximately 35% is sold through fresh-market outlets; on-farm sales account for remaining sales. In the United States, demand for blueberries for fresh-market sales more than doubled between 1997 and 2008, from 70.2 million pounds to more than 170 million

pounds; demand for processed blueberries has also increased. Production and markets in Oregon have followed this national trend.

In addition to domestic fresh-market and processed sales, Oregon's blueberries are an important export in markets that value quality. Blueberry exports to Japan alone are approaching 20 million pounds per

year. Research showing the health benefits of blueberries has been disseminated throughout Asia, increasing consumer demand among our Pacific Rim trading partners. Oregon now has an annual 3-million-pound market for blueberries in China, up from almost nothing just a few years ago. Direct ties between markets in China and Oregon State University research faculty initiated the development of this emerging market.



Oregon Blueberries

Innovative research at Oregon State University has revised recommendations for planting density, trellising, and pruning—and blueberry yields per acre have doubled as a result. This work has reduced both demand for scarce labor resources as well as crop losses due to mechanical harvesting, and has positioned Oregon growers to respond to increased domestic and foreign demand.

Oregon State has been a strong partner with blueberry growers in developing and disseminating innovative, technically advanced cultural practices that reduce production costs, promote environmental quality, and maintain Oregon's worldwide reputation for high yields and quality fruit. Cooperative research and educational outreach have benefited the blueberry industry in these ways:

- Developed disease- and pest-resistant cultivars that produce high-quality fruit with fewer pesticide applications. This work has economically benefited the nursery industry also: Oregon is home to the world's highest volume blueberry nursery. \$ 🍷
- Determined blueberries' water demand precisely, saving growers as much as 20% on water, and 15%–18% on electricity associated with pumping water. \$ 🍷
- Designed trellised plantings for machine harvest. All Oregon's blueberries for processing are machine harvested and, increasingly, so are fresh-market berries. \$
- Improved mulches and fertilizers, resulting in more accurate and efficient fertilizer applications. \$ 🍷
- Addressed weed and fertility management in organic blueberry production. \$ 🍷
- Reduced pesticide applications, from a routine to an as-needed basis, by carefully monitoring conditions that coincide with pest outbreaks. \$ 🍷 🤝
- Gathered and submitted data to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to obtain labeling for a fungicide that gives excellent control of a major fungal disease in blueberries. Before, some growers were losing nearly 50% of their crops. \$
- Provide information and communication resources for growers, processors' field representatives, researchers, and Extension educators through the Northwest Berry and Grape Information Network. \$ 🍷 🤝
- Monitor changes in daily market prices and storage volumes. \$

Benefits key

- \$ Economic benefit
- 🍷 Environmental benefit
- 🤝 Social benefit

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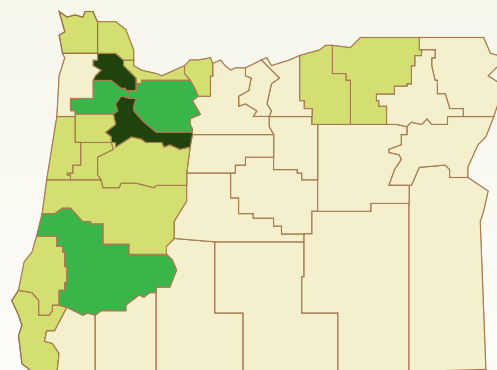
Oregon Blueberries

Family farms	828
Acres harvested	6,770
Pounds produced	43.1 million
Value of sales ¹	\$49.3 million
Oregon's national ranking	#3
Share of U.S. domestic production	12.4%
Health and nutrition benefits:	
Fiber, vitamin C, and flavonoids; free of saturated fat and cholesterol	

Notes

Economic data in this section from the 2008 Census of Agriculture. <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov> and from the Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service. http://nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Oregon/

¹Value of sales" = value to growers from sales of their production. Commodities and farming operations vary widely in how much postharvest handling and packing take place on-farm.



Farm Receipts

- >\$9.5–13.6 million
- \$3.6–6.6 million
- <\$2.1 million