



CALIFORNIA  
*Blueberry*  
COMMISSION

# Newsletter

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## **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Over the past several months, the CA Blueberry Commission staff have been compiling and distributing weekly updates regarding the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Additionally, the CBC has been actively involved in daily conference calls covering California's Legislature in order to remain updated on any time sensitive developments including: significant updates to the number of confirmed cases per county, updated guidance, outbreaks at other agricultural operations, labor issues, potential upcoming legislation, and other resources available to the industry. The CBC has also been working in conjunction with industry members, the North American Blueberry Council (NABC), and other state blueberry organizations to urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to reconsider blueberry growers for Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) funding. As part of this joint effort, a letter was provided to USDA with the data and analysis necessary to demonstrate a loss in sales and therefore reverse the original eligibility assessment for blueberries. As a result of these efforts, the USDA issued a modification to its original CFAP ruling. Blueberries, while originally left out of the program's component dealing with price declines, have been reconsidered by USDA and growers were awarded a payment rate of \$0.20 per pound. Unfortunately, USDA did not modify its original eligibility requirements which stated that growers must demonstrate at least a 5 percent loss in sales between the months of January 15 and April 15. The CBC is now working with USDA and Members of Congress to urge them to extend these dates to include the California blueberry season. At this point, there have been discussions regarding a "CFAP 2.0" plan and it has been reported that analysts expect the next round of payments to compensate growers for losses between April 15 and August 15. The CBC will

continue to provide updates to the on any developments in the CFAP program moving forward.

## **COMMISSION TRAINED BY POPPY SOCIAL MEDIA**

In mid-July, the CBC team was provided a two-day training from Poppy Social Media that was funded by the California Olive Committee. The training focused on techniques to grow newly created accounts that the CBC will be utilizing in order to establish a social media presence. Social media platforms will focus on educating the consumer on the seasonality of California blueberries so that when blueberries are in season, the consumer will specifically look for California blueberries to purchase. The CBC is currently working with Poppy Social Media to schedule posts for Instagram on our newly created account @calblueberries. We will be relying on existing partnerships with CA GROWN and the United States Highbush Council to curate content. Speaking of gathering content, October is California Farmer and Farmworker Month, so the CBC team would like to highlight and recognize California blueberry growers on our new Instagram! If you have pictures of you and your family, that you are comfortable with being posted on our social media accounts, please send them our way to [eoliver@calblueberry.org](mailto:eoliver@calblueberry.org).

## **PROP 15 CAMPAIGN**

Prop 15 will be appearing on the statewide ballot this November. If Prop 15 passes, Prop 13's property tax protections will be put to an end, resulting in the largest property tax increase in California's history. Proponents of Prop 15 have insured that agriculture will continue to be protected by Prop 13. However, if Prop 15 passes in November, California agriculture could be financially negatively impacted by hundreds of millions of dollars annually beginning in 2021. The total impact to

California business will be at least \$12 billion a year. The California Blueberry Association has donated \$10,000 to the California Fresh Fruit Association's efforts against Prop 15. If you would like to learn more about the Prop 15 campaign, please refer to [https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_15,\\_Tax\\_on\\_Commercial\\_and\\_Industrial\\_Properties\\_for\\_Education\\_and\\_Local\\_Government\\_Funding\\_Initiative\\_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_15,_Tax_on_Commercial_and_Industrial_Properties_for_Education_and_Local_Government_Funding_Initiative_(2020))

### **CBC WELCOMES NEW PROGRAM SUPERVISOR AND NEW INTERN**

In June, Elise Oliver joined the CBC as the new Program Supervisor. Elise is a graduate of the University of California, Davis where she completed her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. Delaney Woolwine joined the CBC as the new intern in May. She is starting her senior year at California State University, Fresno, where she is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Business.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- **CBC Board of Directors Meeting**
  - Date: September 22, 2020 at 10:00 am
- **NABC/USHBC Virtual Conference & Expo**
  - September 27-30, 2020
- **PMA Fresh Summit (Virtual)**
  - October 13-15, 2020
- **Asia Fruit Logistica (Virtual)**
  - November 18-20, 2020

*All events are being held online. Contact the CBC office for more information.*



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## **Blueberry Bites**



### **Overnight Refrigerator Oatmeal with Blueberries**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1/4 cup rolled oats
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/4 cup yogurt (flavor of your choice)
- 2 teaspoons honey or maple syrup
- 1/4 cup California blueberries
- 1/2 pint jar

#### **Directions:**

- Combine all ingredients in jar and shake with the lid on. If your jar is too crowded, stir all ingredients in a separate bowl until combined and transfer back into the jar. Store in the refrigerator overnight and enjoy in the morning!

*Recipe courtesy of yummlly.com*

**The CBC office will be closed Monday, September 7th, in observance of Labor Day.**

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