

The U.S. Blueberry Market: A Look Back at the History of National Blueberry Month

Produced by Agronometrics for the NABC

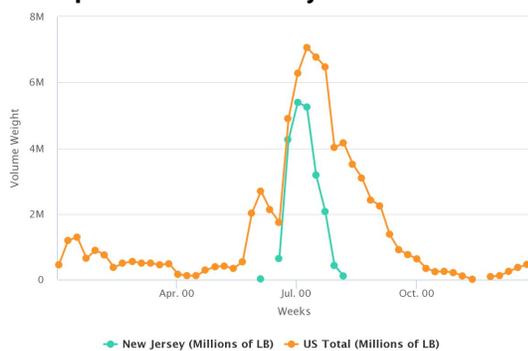
July is an auspicious month for blueberries. Not only does it bring the blue to the red, white and blue on the Fourth of July, it's also National Blueberry Month. Thanks to the efforts of the NABC and over 130 NABC members who helped wave the flag this past March, July has been recognized as National Blueberry Month by proclamation from USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue.

This is a great thing for the industry and helps raise awareness for blueberries. It also couldn't have come at a better time, as the proclamation was announced in March, raising awareness for the category right as the U.S. was going into lockdown and consumers were eagerly looking for tasty and satisfying ways to stay healthy.

However, 2020 is not the first year that July has been named National Blueberry Month. It was first recognized in 1974 with then-President Richard Nixon calling on Americans to "observe that month with appropriate ceremonies and activities." A similar proclamation was made in 2005 by then-USDA Secretary Mike Johanns.

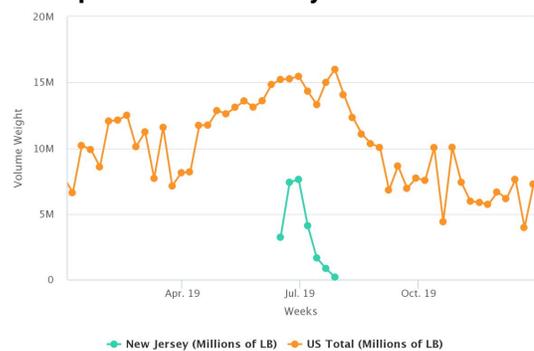
There's clearly a history between blueberries and the month of July, but to get to the root of it, we need to travel back over 100 years to New Jersey in 1893. That's when Elizabeth White set out to tame blueberries as a commercial crop, which would complement her family's cranberry business. With the help of Fredrick Coville, a USDA botanist, the first blueberries were commercialized in 1916. Since those fabled days, New Jersey has remained at the heart of the U.S blueberry industry, even as other production regions both in the U.S. and overseas have played bigger roles.

U.S. total volume (all producing regions) compared to New Jersey volume in 2000



Source: USDA Market News, Movements via [Agronometrics](#)

U.S. total volume (all producing regions) compared to New Jersey volume in 2019



Source: USDA Market News, Movements via [Agronometrics](#)

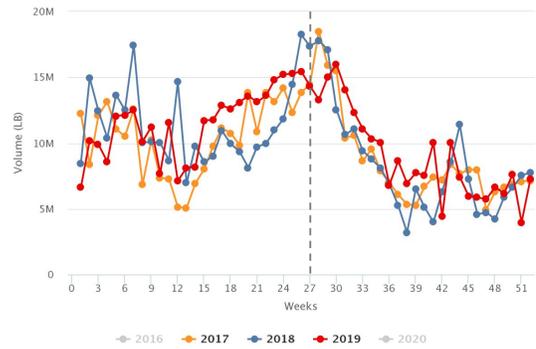
With a season that runs between weeks 24-31, New Jersey's blueberries are perfectly positioned to arrive on the market in July, which normally runs from week 26/27 through week 30/31. The pioneering efforts of New Jersey have allowed the U.S. to create a culture of consumption around July, highlighting it as the key production period even today, when supplies are readily available throughout the year.

Most recent historical volumes from New Jersey



Source: USDA Market News, Movements via [Agronometrics](#)

U.S. historical volumes (all producing regions)



Source: USDA Market News, Movements via [Agronometrics](#)

As New Jersey recently reached the peak of its production, this is a great time to reflect on how far the industry has come since 1916 and celebrate National Blueberry Month with the appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Note on the data:

Please reference [this document](#) for notes on sources and how values are calculated.