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**From:** David K. Bell [mailto:dkbell@maine.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 08, 2009 4:41 PM  
**To:** Jennings, Henry  
**Cc:** Roy Allen; Batteese, Robert; Patricia Kontur  
**Subject:** Fruit Fly Control Notification

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Hi Henry,

For upwards of a few decades the Commission has worked with growers and the Board on different methods of notification to the public regarding blueberry fruit fly maggot control. A lot of the efforts have centered around encouraging growers to speak to neighbors before the growing season and reviewing the Board's notification requirements. For at least a couple of decades we have run printed notices in newspapers outlining Integrated Pest Management (IPM) related to fruit fly control, offering assistance on how to determine land owners/land managers, and printing related contact phone numbers including, with permission, the Board's. Within the last decade we increased the number of papers focusing on weeklies mid-coast to downeast Maine. We have focused on this time of year based on feedback from the Board and the public.

Concurrently, over the last few decades treatments for fruit fly maggots has been reduced (thanks to adoption of of IPM methods developed by UMaine) from a couple times per year down to less than half of the fields being treated once. With the addition of perimeter treatment strategies growers report they have reduced their already low insecticide use by 80% or more. This compares extremely favorably to many other fruits and vegetables. However, we understand some members of the public want to be notified prior to applications even though they are infrequent so we have maintained this outreach effort.

Since last summer there have been numerous discussions at the Board level and at the Legislature regarding notification. We have mentioned the printed notices on more than one occasion. Other proponents of notification have questioned the value of the printed notices and some have outright said they are not effective. To my recollection we are the only ones that have mentioned them in a positive way. One irony is that we had increased this effort about 8 years ago in response to notification feedback from similar individuals and organizations regarding our notification efforts at the time. To our knowledge, no other agricultural group in Maine has conducted this type of outreach year in and year out for decades.

Considering the unsupportive comments made since last summer, the question is should our notices continue? Based on discussions by the Board regarding notification, our understanding is the Board does not feel this notification method is very effective.

Since we usually run the attached notification close to the end of June, would you please ask the Board for their current opinion on whether or not these notices are of value? We do not want to waste grower funds on efforts that the Board and the public thinks is ineffective. Is it time to end the effort?

Thank you for bring this item to the Board.

Regards,

David Bell  
Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine  
581-1475

6/9/2009

## **INFORMATIONAL NOTICE**

**TO: THE CITIZENS OF MAINE WHO LIVE IN BLUEBERRY GROWING AREAS**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE SPRAYING OF BLUEBERRIES**

Beginning in late June to early July, the blueberry fruit fly emerges from its winter nest and begins to lay eggs in the ripening blueberries. Soon thereafter, a small white worm hatches from the egg and feeds on the blueberries. One blueberry fruit fly can destroy 100 berries. This pest is a serious problem to Maine's blueberry farmers because consumers and USDA standards will not accept damaged berries.

During June and July growers monitor fruit fly populations in their fields. Often growers do not have to treat fields, however, if the numbers of fruit flies in a particular field reach a level that can cause serious economic damage, then growers will apply insecticides as needed to control this pest. Usually only one application is needed. Thanks to monitoring methods developed at the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, blueberry growers have substantially reduced the use of insecticides.

The following information is presented so that you may have a better understanding of procedures used when spray applications are necessary.

- The need for treatments will be based on insect numbers determined by monitoring.
- Ground personnel will make reasonable efforts to notify neighbors of applications when requested. The request for notification should be made to the person responsible for management of the land.
- You may call the Wild Blueberry Commission at 1-800-544-1126 for suggestions on how to determine who manages neighboring land.
- On the fields where insecticide is used, Asana, Fruit Fly Bait (spinosad), Imidan, Malathion, Delegate or Sevin will be applied by ground equipment or aircraft.
- Aircraft may be recognized by spraying apparatus attached on the under side of aircraft.
- Fields will be marked by signs indicating material used.
- Information on the regulation and use of pesticides is available from the Maine Board of Pesticide Control, (207) 287-2731.
- If you have any questions regarding exposure or symptoms of exposure, you may call the Northern New England Poison Center, 1-800-222-1222 toll free.

**WILD BLUEBERRY COMMISSION OF MAINE**