

# Plants for Human Health

I N S T I T U T E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2016

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## Blueberry and Cranberry Survey Seeks Industry Input

Profitability and sustainability of the United States' blueberry and cranberry industries require an understanding of production and processing challenges, market changes, and consumer preferences. Breeders and supporting programs must acquire this understanding so that they can develop new cultivars to support industry growth.

A national team of 25 blueberry and cranberry scientists from eleven institutions around the country are working together for the first time to establish a coordinated approach and define research objectives that will ultimately accelerate the development of improved cultivars by selecting for traits that are relevant to stakeholders.

The team will determine the most desirable traits for future cranberry and blueberry breeding by distributing a survey to blueberry and cranberry stakeholders, including growers, nurseries and processing/packing operations. The survey results will lead the discussion among the leading cranberry and blueberry researchers when they convene in 2017 to discuss the latest genomic approaches to breeding.

While breeding can't address some issues, such as weed control or food safety, there are many production and postharvest priorities that can be addressed through genetics, using the latest genomic tools to improve the targeted efforts of breeders.

This is a unique opportunity to share with breeders *your* challenges. The research team has identified several priorities as potential target attributes for breeders to consider. These include, but are not limited to: fruit quality, insect and disease resistance, plant and fruit characteristics to improve machine harvest, frost tolerance and heat resistance. While these generalities were easy to identify, input from the *blueberry and cranberry* community is essential to help bring the specific areas of concern into focus, such as which diseases are most devastating, or what fruit quality attributes are most desirable?

The survey will be distributed at blueberry and cranberry association meetings through the fall and winter. Thank you, in advance, for completing the survey and playing a vital role in

the future breeding efforts of blueberry and cranberry. We look forward to working together to advance the industry through targeted breeding efforts that can help solve industry problems.

This project is funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative Planning Grant, and led by Dr. Massimo Iorizzo, with N.C. State University's Department of Horticulture Science and [Plants for Human Health Institute](#). USDA planning grants are a precursor to larger, Coordinated Agricultural Projects, or CAP grants that can ultimately empower research toward development of advanced breeding-genomic approaches to meet industry and consumer needs. Efforts supported by the USDA-NIFA in other crops, including apple, strawberry, potato and tomato, that coordinate breeding and genomics-based approaches have been highly successful.

If you have any questions, contact Dr. Iorizzo at [miorizz@ncsu.edu](mailto:miorizz@ncsu.edu), or 704-250-5469.

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