

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) has announced details around its recently approved 2021-2025 strategic plan, which charts an ambitious course to exponentially grow the volume and value of blueberries domestically and across the globe.

The [comprehensive plan](#) explains how USHBC will lead demand-driving programs based on shared resources, research and insights that inspire possibilities and sustain the profitable growth of the blueberry industry - ultimately uniting industry stakeholders to work together toward making blueberries the world's favorite fruit.

USHBC collects approximately \$10 million in assessment dollars from growers and importers of record annually, and the strategic plan addresses how the council will invest that funding to fuel increased blueberry demand and consumption.

The plan includes expanded, measurable programmatic goals and tactics for five strategic pillars: integrated marketing communications, health and nutrition, industry services, global business development, and innovation and technology. The health and nutrition pillar will be driven by USHBC's newly hired first-ever senior director of nutrition and health research, Leslie Wada, Ph.D., RD.

"Our 2021-2025 strategic plan is the culmination of more input from blueberry industry leaders and strategic partners than ever before, discussed and distilled for over the better part of a year, to create a bold blueprint to boost blueberries worldwide," said Kasey Cronquist, president of USHBC.

"Our intent is that this plan and its guiding vision will positively impact the future beyond the next five years to hopefully the next decade or two of the blueberry industry."

USHBC embarked on the strategic plan developed in partnership with Rockland Dutton Research & Consulting, drawing on highly relevant experience working with the National Mango Board, World Bank, Beef Checkoff, Hass Avocado Board and more.

The work was the most robust planning process in the USHBC's history, with significant internal and external input from approximately 50 interviews of board members and industry leaders, a survey of 193 industry stakeholders, and discussions with the entire USHBC staff and all partner agencies.

"We've come a long way as a blueberry industry since the USHBC was established 20 years ago, and our exciting, forward-looking vision sets the stage for the next era of growth," said Shelly Hartmann, chair of USHBC.

“I’m proud to have a leading role as we begin to execute our new, unifying strategy to increase demand for blueberries, while strengthening and supporting our growers and stakeholders.”

As the premier organization completely focused on growing the volume of blueberries sold in the U.S. and around the world, USHBC has driven demand for blueberries through comprehensive consumer promotional efforts and programming in retail, foodservice, export and food manufacturing.

In 2019, 49% of U.S. households purchased blueberries — a 25% increase in annual household penetration over the previous six years.

Blueberries are now on one in four menus, with 93% more restaurants offering blueberries than in 2005. And, 76% of food manufacturer respondents reported using blueberries in their company’s manufactured products — higher than any other berry.

USHBC was established in 2000 as an official research and promotion program overseen by USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) division. It’s governed by a 20-member board that periodically adopts strategic plans to guide short- and long-term budget and program decisions.

To view the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, visit ushbc.org/about-ushbc.