

Connecticut Weekly AGRICULTURAL REPORT

Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner
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Connecticut Department of Agriculture
July 7, 2015



Brothers Joe (L) and Don Dzen roll up mesh netting covering their entire 20-acre blueberry orchard in East Windsor.

SIX-WEEK BLUEBERRY HARVEST REQUIRES YEAR-ROUND WORK

By Steve Jensen, Office of Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky

While strawberries may be considered the summer's marquee fruit, Don Dzen says it is actually blueberries that draw more pick-your-own customers to his family's East Windsor farm.

"I think blueberries are more popular because they're easier to pick and you're not crawling around on the ground," Dzen said late last week as he prepared to open the 20-acre blueberry orchard on Barber Hill Road. "Picking blueberries has

really become an event to be out with the family and the kids."

Blueberries are July's featured crop in a Department of Agriculture program that promotes a different specialty crop each month.

Promotions can be heard on several state broadcast radio stations, including in Spanish, as well as on Pandora radio. The crop is also featured on the department's Facebook and Pinterest pages.

The Dzens are one of more than 300 blueberry growers in Connecticut that cultivate about 430 acres of the fruit.



A complete list of pick-your-own farms is available on the agriculture department's website: CTGrown.gov.

At Dzen's Blueberry Hill last week, Don and his brother Joe were busy readying for the traditional July 4th opening of their orchard. In a field across the road, about a dozen people were scouring for the last remaining pick-your-own strawberries.

"There's really not a break between seasons," Don Dzen said. "It's all very condensed."

The Dzens grow three varieties of blueberries that mature and ripen throughout the six-week season.

Bluetta is the earliest, but produces a relatively small berry. The later varieties, Blue Ray and Blue Crop, "are the big ones that everybody wants," Joe said as he sampled some of the early Bluettas from right off the bush.

They employ a crew of about 20 that picks for commercial sale to outlets including Whole Foods and Stew Leonard's, as well as farm stands and markets such as their own just down the road in Ellington. The farm was founded in the 1930s by

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PA LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

Avg. Dressing

	LOW	HIGH
SLAUGHTER COWS:		
breakers 75-80% lean	102.00	112.00
boners 80-85% lean	101.00	111.00
lean 88-90% lean	96.00	105.50
CALVES graded bull		
No 1 120-128 lbs	470.00	470.00
No 1 106-118 lbs	512.00	530.00
No 1 98-104 lbs	550.00	555.00
No 1 86-96 lbs	570.00	595.00
No 2 120-128 lbs	462.00	462.00
No 2 112-118 lbs	512.00	512.00
No 2 102-110 lbs	530.00	537.00
No 2 94-100 lbs	545.00	555.00
No 2 80-92 lbs	565.00	585.00
SLAUGHTER STEERS		
HiCh/Prm 3-4	153.00	158.50
Ch2-3	148.50	154.00
Sel1-3	140.00	149.00
SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS		
HiCh/Prm 3-4	139.00	145.00
Ch2-3	131.00	140.00
Sel1-2	125.00	135.50
SLAUGHTER HEIFERS		
HiCh/Prm3-4	149.50	154.00
Ch2-3	147.00	153.00
Sel2-3	146.00	149.00

NEW HOLLAND, PA

SLAUGHTER LAMBS: Woolled & Shorn Choice and Prime 2-3		
60-80 lbs	225.00	232.00
80-90 lbs	218.00	222.00
90-110 lbs	222.00	235.00
110-130 lbs	226.00	226.00
SLAUGHTER EWES: Good 2-3		
90-110 lbs	90.00	104.00
120-160 lbs	92.00	105.00
160-200 lbs	90.00	106.00
BUCKS		
80-100 lbs	206.00	206.00
160-200 lbs	117.00	146.00
200-300 lbs	94.00	112.00
SLAUGHTER GOATS: Sel.1, by head, est.		
40-60 lbs	172.00	190.00
60-80 lbs	195.00	225.00
Nannies/Does:		
130-180 lbs	240.00	262.00
Bucks/Billies:		
150-250 lbs	220.00	245.00

NEW HOLLAND, PA. HOG AUCTION

52-56	200-300 lbs	62.00	65.00
	250-300 lbs	57.00	59.00
	300-350 lbs	50.00	55.00
48-52	200-300 lbs	50.00	55.00
Sows, US1-3			
	350-450 lbs	25.00	28.00
	450-500 lbs	30.50	32.00
	500-650 lbs	28.00	32.00
Boars	200-300 lbs	35.00	37.00
	400-750 lbs	9.00	13.00

WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLESBoston Terminal and Wholesale Grower Prices
NEW ENGLAND GROWN

	LOW	HIGH
ALFALFA SPROUTS, 5 LB	14.00	14.00
BEANS, GREEN, BU	30.00	30.00
BEANS, WAX, BU	30.00	30.00
BEANS, WAX, 1/2 BU	18.00	20.00
BEAN SPROUTS, 10 LB	6.00	7.00
BEETS, 12 CT	15.00	18.00
BEETS, GOLDEN, 12 CT	24.00	24.00
BLUEBERRIES, 12-1 PT/LIDS	30.00	30.00
BROCCOLI, 12 CT	15.00	15.00
CHERRIES, 12-1PT	25.00	25.00
CIDER, APPLE, 4 -1 GAL	21.00	21.00
CORN, 5 DOZ	18.00	22.00
CUKES, 1-1/9 BU	23.00	30.00
CUKES, PICKLING, 1/2 BU	18.00	20.00
KALE, PER BUNCH	1.00	1.25
LETTUCE, HYDROPONIC, 12 CT	15.00	15.00
LETTUCE, LF, GRN, RED 12 CT	12.00	15.00
LETTUCE, ROMAINE, 12 CT	12.00	15.00
PEAS, ENGLISH, 1/2 BU	20.00	20.00
PEAS, ENGLISH, BU	50.00	50.00
PEAS, SNOW, 10 LB	15.00	15.00
PEAS, SNAP, 10 LB	20.00	20.00
RADISHES, BUNCHED, 12 CT	10.00	12.00
RASPBERRIES, 12-1/2PTS	25.00	25.00
SQUASH, 8 BALL, 1/2 BU	12.00	15.00
SQUASH, PATTYPAN, 1/2 BU	13.00	15.00
SQUASH, YELLOW, 1/2 BU	12.00	15.00
SQUASH, GOLDN ZUCH, 1/2 BU	15.00	15.00
SQUASH, ZUCH, 1/2 BU	12.00	15.00
STRAWBERRIES, 8-1QT	32.00	32.00
SWISH CHR, BUNCHED, 12 CT	15.00	18.00
TOMATOES, GRHSE, 12 LB	22.00	24.00
TOMS, HEIRLOOM, GH, 10LB	23.00	25.00

SHIPPED IN

APRICOTS, WA, 2LYR PK, 72	32.00	33.00
CANTALOUPE, GA, 9	15.00	16.00
GARLIC, WHITE, CA, 30LB	64.00	68.00
GRAPE, WHT, SDLS, CA, 19LB, #1	28.00	32.00
NECTARINE, CA, 25LB, 54/56	24.00	26.00
OKRA, FL, 1/2 BU	18.00	22.00
PARSLEY, PLAIN, NJ, 30 CT	25.00	28.00
PEACHES, GA, 1/2 BU, 2-3/4"	18.00	22.00
PEPPERS, BELL, NJ, 1-1/9 BU	32.00	32.00
PLUMS, BLK, CA, 28LB, 30-35	38.00	42.00
TURNIP, PRPLE TOPS, NJ, 25LB	20.00	20.00
WTRMLN, SDLS, 10-14LB, EA	3.25	3.50

**USDA-WHOLESALE
ORGANIC BROWN EGGS**

EX LARGE DOZ	2.61	3.61
EX LGE 1/2 DOZ	1.81	1.95
LARGE DOZ	2.30	3.50
LARGE 1/2 DOZ	1.71	1.90

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Middlefield, CT, July 6, 2015

	LOW	HIGH
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	100.00	115.00
61-75 lbs.	120.00	130.00
76-90 lbs.	510.00	520.00
91-105 lbs.	530.00	540.00
106 lbs. & up	550.00	560.00
Farm Calves	570.00	580.00
Starter Calves	90.00	110.00
Veal Calves	1@	110.00
Open Heifers	130.00	177.50
Beef Heifers	150.00	162.50
Feeder Steers	140.00	185.00
Beef Steers	125.00	127.00
Stock Bulls	140.00	155.00
Beef Bulls	139.00	142.00
Replacement Cows	n/a	n/a
Replacement Heifers	n/a	n/a
Boars	1@	.01
Sows	1@	23.00
Butcher Hogs	n/a	n/a
Feeder Pigs	n/a	n/a
Sheep	85.00	180.00
Lambs	190.00	240.00
Goats each	100.00	270.00
Kid Goats	65.00	125.00
Canners	up to	105.50
Cutters	102.00	104.00
Utility Grade Cows	105.00	109.00
Rabbits each	5.00	24.00
Chickens each	3.00	30.00
Ducks each	7.00	12.00

NORTHEAST EGGS/USDAPer doz. Grade A and Grade A white
in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.81	1.99
LARGE	1.75	1.89
MEDIUM	1.45	1.58

NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGSPer doz. Grade A brown in
carton delivered store door. (Range)

XTRA LARGE	2.20	2.30
LARGE	2.17	2.27
MEDIUM	1.80	1.84

PA FEEDER PIG SUMMARY

US #1-2	20-30 lb	150.00	150.00
	30-40 lb	110.00	300.00
	40-50 lb	100.00	130.00
	50-60 lb	85.00	140.00
	60-80 lb	85.00	120.00
US #2-3	20-30 lb	100.00	170.00
	30-40 lb	130.00	140.00
	40-50 lb	100.00	100.00
	50-60 lb	110.00	110.00
	60-80 lb	85.00	85.00

**USDA ORGANIC HAY-SQUARES
GOOD**

ALFALFA	LARGE	230.00	300.00
ALFALFA/ ORCHARD	SMALL	175.00	175.00

FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut's first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal's Power Fence 860-491-2290.

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227.

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.

8-R. CT non-GMO grain and corn. Hay and straw. Pleasant View Farms. Louis. 860-803-0675.

53-R. There's still time to buy a Classic...but not much. New federal EPA-NSPS rules will soon eliminate your choice to buy a new Classic. Now is the best time to buy a new Classic. 203-263-2123 www.mywoodfurnace.com

62-R. Kubota L3010 w/LA 481 front loader weight box 5 ft brush hog. 300 hours. \$16,500.00. 860-205-3399.

65-R. For Sale: Parts for Grimm hay tedders. Also, rough lumber. 860-684-3458.

67-R. 5HP water pumps for farm/nursery irrigation. 230 volt 80 GPM. Both pumps for \$1,100.00 or B.O. 203-482-3816 nick@sambridge.com

68-R. Barn doors. 9'X9'. One with 3 small windows. Solid wood. \$600.00 for the pair. 860-481-0029.

WANTED

69-R. Transplant wheel harrow - 8' or 10'. Crop sprayer - 3 pt or pull type. Working condition. 860-537-8890.

MISCELLANEOUS

6-R. Farm/Land specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tustin Realty (860) 644-5667.

41-R. Bulldozing in Eastern Connecticut. Large farm ponds dug. Land clearing for farmers also a specialty. Work done with rootrake to preserve topsoil and remove rocks. Personal service. Will help with permits. Don Kemp 860-546-9500.

BIG E APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

The Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications to showcase Connecticut Grown products, services, or agricultural commodities in the Connecticut Building at the upcoming Eastern State's Exposition (Big E.)

The fair runs from Friday, September 18 to Sunday, October 4. Applications are due by Wednesday, July 15, at 3 p.m. Applications are available for download at CTGrown.gov. Questions may be directed to 860-713-2503 or Rebecca.Eddy@ct.gov.

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their grandfather Steven Dzen, who raised potatoes, tobacco, and dairy cows. Their father, Donald Dzen Sr., expanded into strawberries and Christmas trees in the 1970s, and blueberries were planted around 1980.

The farm now totals about 400 acres, including 25 of strawberries, 150 of pumpkins and 100 of Christmas trees. Rows for the blueberry bushes were cut with an angled disc harrow that created a raised bed, essential to provide proper drainage.

The beds are covered in about 18 inches of wood mulch, which the farm gets for free by allowing tree-service companies to dump chips in an enormous pile that has accumulated at the entrance to the orchard.

"The raised bed and the mulch keeps the bushes from sitting in water," Don explained. "Blueberry bushes like well-drained soil but they need a lot of water when they're in fruit."

Like many farmers, the Dzens say irrigation was crucial during a dry May. A relatively cool and moist June helped to size up the berries, which require about two inches of water a week.

Water is delivered by miles of drip irrigation lines snaking through the bushes.

"It is so much more efficient and economical than overhead spraying," Joe said.

Another key move to increase crop yield was installing mesh netting over the orchard about five years ago to protect the fruit from being eaten by birds. They had tried various noisemakers over the years, but the birds eventually learned to ignore them.

Making the roughly \$150,000 investment in poles and netting was daunting, Don Dzen said, "but we decided to bite the bullet because the last year we were uncovered the bird damage was terrible."

When the final blueberry is picked and the netting taken down in late summer, the harvest may be over but orchard maintenance and preparation for next season has only begun. Weeks are spent pruning the bushes, removing up to half the wood on each.

"You end up with a pretty big pile of branches in the rows," Don said.

Wood mulch is spread over the raised beds in winter, an annual six-week chore for Joe. He uses an old mixing wagon with a side-discharge implement that sprays the material along the rows.

Pest management is aided by several American Kestrels – the smallest member of the falcon family - that live in a half-dozen nesting boxes scattered around the farm.

The birds were introduced to the farm several years ago by Tom Sayers, a kestrel aficionado from Tolland working to address a sharp decline in the birds' population in Eastern states, mainly due to loss of habitat to housing development and a lack of naturally-occurring nesting cavities.

"They're big insect-eaters and it's a very ecologically-friendly part of our integrated pest management system," Don said.

The farm has been certified by the agriculture department for its use of Good Agricultural Practices, which is based on a farm's adherence to recommendations in the FDA's Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

Don and Joe say the improvements and efficiencies they've made are a tribute to the hard work of their father and grandfather in building the farm, and will hopefully set a path to future family success.

"The next generation is starting to show some interest," Don said. "I remember my Dad starting a lot of this when I was a kid and that is something that I would definitely like to see continue."



Clockwise from top left: The 20-acre blueberry orchard at Dzen farm is watered with miles of drip irrigation lines on top of raised beds; freshly-picked berries ready for sale at the family's market in Ellington; an American Kestrel used for pest control; an enormous pile of mulch left by tree-service companies is spread in the orchard every winter.



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