

Focus on anthocyanins



Anthocyanins are polyphenols. They are good for the human health (antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects), although they are not totally assimilated through the human metabolism. But they are helpful, and we need them. Anthocyanins are found in plants - they are responsible for a deep purple colour and have an astringent effect, like in grapes, cranberries, red oranges - and of course **BLACKCURRANTS!** Authentic blackcurrant juice - a simple, home-made blackcurrant juice - contains around 2500 mg/l of anthocyanins.

“ANTHONIA: Anthocyanins - nutritional investigation in alliance”, a recent study conducted by the University of Geisenheim (Germany), the Institute for Nutritional Sciences of the University of Giessen (Germany), an Institute for Children’s nutrition in Dortmund (Germany), and an Institute for healthy and happy eating - the MRB in Karlsruhe (Germany), aimed to find juices or smoothies which may help children and youths to increase their daily intake of fruit and vegetables. At the start of the project was the statement that only one child out of four eats enough fruits and vegetables every day. And juices may well replace the missing nutritional elements, because they are easily accepted by children.

Tests were made with red grape juice, mixed with other fruits, and tasted by children between 4 and 17. Among other results, it showed that oxidative stress decreased after drinking smoothies or juices with a high anthocyanin content - and that children liked the tastes and colors of the drinks, although they were not used to them.

Of course, this study focused on grapes - but blackcurrants contain as much anthocyanins (sometimes even more, depending on the blackcurrant or grape varieties) than grapes. We may easily understand the potential of our favorite little berry, should there finally be a change in the consumer’s habits.

Blackcurrants were also highlighted in a recent BBC show: “How To Stay Young” - an investigation about the secret of long life in certain population groups. It showed that certain plant compounds are responsible for longevity and protecting

brain health - plants of deep purple color, with a high concentration of anthocyanins. A scientist from the Norwich Institute of Research confirmed that these pigments “are good for blood flow, delivering nutrients and oxygen for the brain to work well. They also help slow down natural shrinking of the brain that occurs as we get older.” In Europe, the food that contains the most anthocyanins are blackcurrants - and they contain four times more than its nearest rival, blueberries.

We will hear more about research conducted in New Zealand and England it at the next IBA conference in Ashford. It will not be about children’s nutrition, neither longevity, but the decrease of oxidative stress in sports thanks to blackcurrant - and much more!

Royal Blackcurrants for a royal birthday

Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her 90th birthday on 21st April - the kind of event which normally has nothing to do with blackcurrants.



But this time time, it’s different: a Scottish chocolatier was asked to create chocolates for a limited-edition release of 90 commemorative boxes, sold in Selfridges, London, on her birthday.

And he chose blackcurrants as one of the main ingredients - because the Queen favours old-fashioned flavours like rose or **blackcurrant**. And because her favourite colour is mauve. And, of course, because blackcurrants are simply excellent!

Iain Burnett created mauve-hued chocolates, using 4 kilos of handpicked and handwashed blackcurrants from the royal estate of Sandringham. The result: Blackcurrants & Cream Velvet Truffles.



A wonderful publicity for blackcurrants - and mouthwatering! Wouldn’t you like

to taste them also?



Food Chain Partnership - The Polish blackcurrant project with Bayer



A blackcurrant demo farm, demo trials, the presentation of latest sustainable crop protection solutions by Bayer advisors to the Polish blackcurrant growers, practical tests in leading farms, and regular exchange of information – these were the keys to success in the newly established partnership between the Polish blackcurrant association KSPCP and Bayer Crop Science. The collaboration has started in 2014 at the 4th international blackcurrant conference of the IBA in Bialowieza.

Both organizations agreed to work on a food chain partnership, involving every player in the food chain from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer.

food chain partnership



The main goal of such partnerships is to match the consumers' demand, who are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition, by supplying them with high-quality fresh produce.

The Polish blackcurrant project has been presented by Bayer in February as a case study at Fruit Logistica in Berlin.



The three goals of this project were:

- to increase the number of farmers participating in sustainable blackcurrant production
- to improve production quality by implementing the latest products and services from Bayer
- to cooperate in enhancing the image of blackcurrants as a pro-health fruit.



New sustainable crop protection solutions were provided by Bayer to 54 highly motivated blackcurrant growers, and several meteorological stations installed all over Poland. The project also got the support of scientists from the University of Life Sciences in Lublin and the Institute of Horticulture in Skierniewice. This combination allowed the project to have a very positive outcome. The project should even be extended to include other berries, and a closer cooperation with fruit processors and exporters should be beneficial to finally deliver healthier fruit through the further reduction of the maximum residue limits levels.

Promoting blackcurrants: a remarkable Polish initiative to be copied

A campaign to promote blackcurrants - this kind of initiative had already been taken by the French association of blackcurrant producers (ANCG) in 2009, and another one has been ongoing in the UK for several years now: www.blackcurrantfoundation.co.uk and www.britishsummerfruits.co.uk. The goal is of course to try and drive demand for blackcurrants by bringing its wonderful taste, various uses and extraordinary health benefits to the better knowledge of consumers.

This time, a Polish campaign has been started in 2015 for a three-year period for a total cost of almost 4 Million € - with a difference to the other initiatives: it is

promoting berries in general (blackcurrant, blueberry, raspberry and strawberry), and in five countries (Poland, Austria, Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic) at the same time. Driven by Polish organizations of fruit growers (Association of Polish Fruit Growers - ZSRP, Blueberry Growers Association - SPBA, Strawberry Growers Association - SPT, the National Association of Blackcurrant Growers - KSPCP), the campaign is funded for half of its cost by the European Union, 30% have been brought up by the Polish government, and the four grower associations contribute for the remaining 20%.



Extraordinary properties
of ordinary fruit

The campaign is running under the slogan “Extraordinary properties of ordinary fruit”. With a series of informational and promotional activities on two websites (www.power-fruits.eu/en/ and www.owocejagodowe.pl/), it aims at familiarizing consumers with the high quality, richness in minerals and vitamins and the unique taste of berries from the European Union. The development of our domestic markets and the education of consumers are a priority, and every blackcurrant growing country may go for similar initiatives.

And hopefully, this is how we can manage the reconciliation of supply with demand.

Read more and more.

Blackcurrant price disaster 2015 -

what's up for 2016?



The blackcurrant harvest has now been completed in New Zealand - and this is how the season 2015/16 ends for the blackcurrant growers worldwide. While growers in Europe are now harvesting buds or preparing for a new fruit harvest season and new chances, 2015 had brought a great deal of frustration and

has left a bitter taste in their mouths:

Overall, the harvest was good, but prices too low to reach the break-even level. Several countries already announced a decrease of their acreage, and we will hear about it in detail at the next conference in Ashford.

Everybody wonders what happened to the biggest European producer: Poland. From last year's IBA-conference in Vilnius, we remember that their national blackcurrant association KSPCP wanted to ask the Polish government to compensate growers who would decide to limit their production by partially or totally liquidating their plantations. The initiative has been taken, and the KSPCP was hoping to have an elimination of 20% of the blackcurrant growing surface in their country. This would have been a long-term solution to overproduction and low prices, and was highly expected and appreciated by other European country associations. But not very surprisingly (parliamentary elections in October 2015 in Poland!), the Polish government decided instead to give each blackcurrant grower 150 Euro per hectare in compensation of the low market prices. Not the kind of solution to help limiting production and persuade farmers to change crops... But we do not know yet how Poland's 4000 growers have reacted to the price disaster in 2015 - and their reaction is decisive for the evolution of growing surfaces.

Growers all over the Northern hemisphere are now looking anxiously towards budspring and harvest in summer: Will there be spring frost and nip everything in

the bud? Will there be hail? Will prices climb this year thanks to less offer than demand, with probably lower acreage in total?

We have to wait until June and our bi-annual international meeting to have a few answers.

Innovative blackcurrant product competition



The 5th International Blackcurrant Conference in Ashford, Kent, is launching a competition for blackcurrant products in three categories: drinks, food products and functional food. Through peer evaluation and an expert panel, the Blackcurrant product of 2016 will be elected.

You have an interesting product to present? Register now!

Or maybe you know someone who might have an interesting product to present? Share the information!

More information and registration

IBA President's outlook into 2016



Predictions are always difficult, especially when they deal about the future. Luckily, I have a crystal ball which shows the future (it is a very interesting and powerful tool, only presidents can borrow it). Working with it is not easy, because it shows blurred pictures. But there are future trends which are not surprising: for example that we get older and work longer - or that everything goes digital.

The evolution shaped our bodies: moles got the best hands for digging, other animals got a long throat to get the best leaves in high trees. We humans have the biggest brain - which is often useful, but all the other parts of our body are still a very ancient construction with old fashioned needs. The fittest survive - and today, it seems the fittest may be those who sit in front of their computers. I was curious to see how it would affect our being in many generations? Is evolution still working? I therefore switched my crystal ball into the long range mode, scared to discover humans consisting of only two parts: a bottom to sit on, with a finger for wiping displays. But as far as I could see, it seems a bottom with a finger is not our appearance in the future.

After this very relieving discovery, I continued to look into the ball - and was very pleased to discover that health is among the future mega trends! Pleased, because health and nutrition belong together; and we blackcurrant people are lucky to make the best natural food available. That is good news!

Unfortunately, the short range mode was more serious. It showed a world in disorder: extremists, climate change, refugees, just to name a few. There are big tasks ahead. Luckily, we have political recipes which enabled us to live in peace and wealth for the last decades. Nationalism, separation, fencing and other dividing forces played no role in it. My crystal ball told me that the political recipes we experienced will work again in future.

It also showed me that our IBA is small and without big influence - for the

moment. But as we understood that working together is better than working against each other, I could see that our future is bright. And this future is not so far away.

Best wishes to all of you for a Good Year 2016 !

Dirk Herdieckerhoff,

IBA President

Blackcurrant - the stress hero



There is enormous health potential in our superfruit: the blackcurrant. Stress hero is how it can be defined generally. Therefore, the motto of the last European Blackcurrant conference in Vilnius in 2015 has been “Blackcurrant - the stress hero”. And not surprisingly, the emphasis of the next International Blackcurrant Conference in Ashford will also be on the health benefits of the blackcurrant.

Various institutes all over the world carry out extremely interesting research work. Of course, you may want to know more about it.

We have summed up the health benefits claimed for the blackcurrant - covering a wide range! - on our website here.

But this is just a small insight into the wonderful potential of the superfruit blackcurrant. More to come...

The IBA web-library online again

Conference presentations online again! After a few weeks of transition and development of this section, the IBA web-library is now once again fully available for our members!

We have collected the presentations of our annual conferences over the past few years. Therefore, you can view whatever information we have got from the researchers, marketers and partners here. You need to register for accessing this section. Also, you can only access it if you are a member of the IBA.

By now, almost 100 presentations are classified in 4 categories of interest. They are recognizable with their icons:



agronomy/plant breeding/horticulture



health research



market/demand & supply



supplier & customer information

For those who have been present at the conferences, you may of course search by conference. You can also enter keywords, like the name of the presenter, title of the presentation etc.

We are looking forward to adding much more highly interesting presentations into this library after the next conference in Ashford.

China - a new market for blackcurrants?



More than 1.3 billion inhabitants - all likely to use any kind of product made of blackcurrants! China, the second biggest economic power of the world, has become a major export market for many countries and all sorts of products. Even if its economic growth has started slowing down over the past five years: let's see what is going on for blackcurrants in China.

China itself is growing blackcurrants (varieties Botrop, Ben Lomond, Han Feng mainly) in the North West (Xinjiang) and North East (Heilongjiang) of the country. China has its own research institute in the university of Jilin. The researchers of this institute were very kind to give us more information about the blackcurrant situation in China.

A limited local production covers 3000 hectares. Here, blackcurrants growing is part of family businesses. Most of the times, people work in small farms without any employees: the size of the blackcurrant fields are less than 1/2 hectare.

The local food industry uses blackcurrants in yogurts, juices or cordials, jams, sweets and blackcurrant wines. Nevertheless, the production is very limited: the Chinese food tradition does not really include the consumption of jams, of example. Finally, it is evident: blackcurrants do not yet delight the Chinese taste buds. The fruit is rather unknown to the biggest part of the population. There is not much promotion of the health benefits of the blackcurrant yet. And this results in a very low demand for our superfruit.

BUT: we keep getting requests for blackcurrants and pomace because of their high anthocyanin content. The deep red colour of blackcurrants (red is a lucky colour for the Chinese) and blackcurrant extracts seem interesting in China.

We therefore have reason to think that this huge country will soon become a market for blackcurrants. As it has already become for wines or other products. Let's keep it in mind!

Blackcurrant is now on facebook!

We have to tell it to the whole world: blackcurrant is the best berry for life! And what a better way is there to get the message to millions of people all over the world than through facebook?

There are almost 1.5 billion community members worldwide, and you may all join the blackcurrant community, using the language which you find easiest for you: English, German or French. Here are the links:



**Blackcurrant - best
berry for life**



Cassis - lecker gesund

Cassis - petite baie contre stress et tensions

The content will be mostly the same for the three languages. More and more content will be added, including recipes for cooking with blackcurrants and the use of blackcurrants for human health. Be active, like, comment, share, and help us to have a community of at least one thousand people within a year. The message will spread, and more and more blackcurrants used all over the world!

The next IBA conference is coming: prepare for another wonderful event

IBA conference 2015 in Vilnius

The newly created Lithuanian blackcurrant association hosted the International Blackcurrant Association European conference in June this year in Vilnius, under the motto "Blackcurrant - the stress hero". 70 delegates from almost 20 different countries enjoyed extremely interesting presentations and discovered blackcurrant farming and processing in Lithuania. Many thanks to the Lithuanian team for their involvement and wonderful organization!





more pictures

If you were not able to assist, you may read what happened at the IBA Annual General Meeting [here](#).

IBA conference 2016 in Ashford

We are now looking forward to the next IBA conference, which will be held from 14th to 16th June 2016 in Ashford, Kent, organized by the UK blackcurrant association. The location is very easily accessible and close to some excellent blackcurrant production areas.

The conference will focus on health aspects derived from using blackcurrants, marketing innovation and managed production. You will all soon receive detailed information and invitations by the organizers of the conference. We hope to meet you in Ashford!