

Study shows Scottish fruit is available.....but at a price!

A study has shown that although a wide range of soft fruits are available to consumers during the winter months, finding locally-grown frozen fruit presents much more of a challenge. Jennifer Dewar, a student at the University of Abertay, undertook an investigation of Dundee grocery stores to determine the availability of frozen and fresh soft fruit during the winter months. Stores of varying sizes and catering to different target markets were chosen from several socioeconomic areas in an attempt to encompass a representative sample.

Stores reviewed included eight major grocery stores (e.g. Tesco, Safeway), seven secondary stores (e.g. Kwiksave, Farm Foods), and sixteen minor/independent stores (e.g. SPAR, local green grocers).

Frozen berries available included strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, blueberries, "summer fruits" (mixture of strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, cherries, redcurrants) and "blackforest fruits" (mixture of cherries, grapes, blueberries, blackberries, blackcurrants). Fresh berries available included strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. There were no fresh/frozen blackcurrants, redcurrants or gooseberries in Dundee stores.

The majority of the frozen berries (86%) had no country of origin listed on the package or was labelled as "more than one country". It was thought unlikely that those berries were sourced from Scotland. Only Marks and Spencer offered frozen berries grown in Scotland – coincidentally the most expensive frozen berries. Sainsbury's had frozen British

raspberries for sale (2nd most expensive frozen berries available).

All fresh berries were imported, primarily from Spain (35%), but also from countries such as Chile, Mexico, Egypt and Morocco.

Raspberries were the most expensive frozen berry (average cost £0.52/100g) across all store categories, while strawberries were the least expensive (£0.30/100g). Frozen strawberries were notably less expensive in the secondary stores than in the primary stores (£0.20/100g vs. £0.50/100g respectively).

Fresh strawberries were significantly less expensive than other berries (£0.52/100g) across all store categories; blackberries were the most expensive (£1.59/100g), followed closely by blueberries (£1.44/100g) and raspberries (£1.12/100g). Numerous price promotions were offered for fresh berries but none for frozen berries.

Marks and Spencer was the most expensive primary grocery store overall, while Tesco offered the greatest variety of frozen and fresh berries. Despite limited variety and availability of fresh and frozen berries, secondary stores were less expensive overall for the berries they did have in stock.



This study was most interesting and it is aimed that it will ideally be paired with a similar study undertaken during the summer berry-growing months.

Dates for the diary food events this summer

4th - 13th June: Falkirk Area Food and Drink Festival
www.falkirkinspired.com/foodfest.html

12th June: Taste of Grampian, Thaistone Centre
www.tasteofgrampian.co.uk

24th - 27th June: Royal Highland Show, Ingliston
www.royalhighlandshow.org

3rd - 5th September: Dundee Food and Flower Festival, Camperdown
www.dundeeflowerandfoodfestival.com/2004.html

Tune in for berries

Berry Scotland will be featured on the Beechgrove Garden Potting Shed with Frieda Morrison on Sunday 27th June on Radio Scotland. Tune in for the latest berry news as well as lots of seasonal hints and tips.

Board Member Profile

Ewan is a director of Saltire Fruits and has been a soft fruit grower for over 30 years. He grows the traditional Scottish crops of raspberries and brambles as well as recently experimenting with more unusual crops.

He is also a former chairman of the Scottish soft fruit discussion society, was the NFU soft fruit convenor for 8 years and a former chairman of Scottish Soft Fruit Growers.

Ewan is an advocate for the sometimes overlooked processing side of the soft fruit industry and has offered lots of advice and guidance to Berry Scotland regarding the different forms of fruit available and their applications. Ewan believes that the fresh and processing sides of the soft fruit industry can complement each other by offering consumers a year-round supply of berries and berry products.

Berry Day expands as the idea takes off

The berry days which were so popular with primary school children in Angus last year are being expanded in 2004 to give even more children the change to experience the joys of locally grown fruit.



Fiona Dawson of Angus Council during last year's berry day

The scheme is organised by Berry Scotland in conjunction with local authorities and school meals contractors and will take place in all primaries in Angus, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross as well as in a pilot group of 6 schools in the Stirling Council area.

The fruit for each area is being sourced from local suppliers as follows:

- Angus - Abbey Fruits

- Dundee - Scotfruit
- Perth & Kinross - Stewarts of Tayside
- Stirling - Broadslap Fruit Farm

There has been a great seal of support for the Berry Days scheme, with funding coming from

several different arenas, including Lottery Awards for All (funding for Tayside), Amy Barnett-Skea Charitable Trust (funding for part of Angus), and Sainsbury's (funding for Stirling).

It is hoped that this year's events will be as successful as those in 2003, where school –meal uptake increased by 40% when berries were added to the usual menu.

Scientific Update

Back in 2002, the Berry Scotland Programme received funding for two years from the Scottish Executive to appoint a Scientific Co-ordinator and Julie Beattie was appointed. As Julie's post will soon end, this seemed like an opportune moment to summarise some of her achievements of the last 2 years:

- a review of the health benefits of soft fruit is soon to be completed in conjunction with scientists at the Rowett Research Institute and the University of Glasgow
- contacts were made with scientific community and a research conference undertaken
- a number of funding applications were made for new research
- work with local authorities was undertaken to provide berries on the school dinner menu (180 schools)
- contact was made with over 60 growers via newsletter
- an outline website has been created
- contacts were made with other groups who are interested in food and health e.g. Scottish Community Diet Project, Forth Valley Food Links, public health departments

Sign up for Growers Guide

Berry Scotland are developing the buyers guide section of their website to provide a more comprehensive guide to sourcing soft fruit in Scotland. If you are a grower and would like to enjoy a free listing in the guide, just fill out the enclosed form and post or fax back. The guide will be a valuable tool for both companies and members of the public looking to source local fruit. Links can also be made to growers' websites from the site.

THE BOARD

The Berry Scotland board comprises berry-related experts from a variety of backgrounds: **Professor Annie Anderson**, Centre for Public Health Nutrition Research, University of Dundee; **Professor Mike Lean**, Human Nutrition Department, University of Glasgow; **Andrew Logan**, Grower (Scotfruit); **Hector MacLean**, Expert in Rural Diversification; **Ronnie McNicol**, Breeder (Redeva); **Ewan Pate**, Grower (Saltire Fruits); **Anne Thomson**, Marketing Consultant (Gallagher Associates) and Processor (Ella Drinks Ltd).



Saltire Fruits Ltd



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