

Sustainable cranberry production in Wisconsin

Technology... Community...Stewardship

All in a little red fruit

The Wisconsin cranberry industry continues to advance in ways that optimize production based on the latest research while protecting the environment. These improvements in sustainable cranberry production were captured in a recent grower survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association.

Optimizing production with technology...

- **Growers send their plants to the doctor.**
92% of growers send soil and plant tissue to laboratories for nutrient analysis to help decide if fertilizer is needed.
- **Growers take their plants' temperature.**
92% monitor temperature in their cranberry production beds to know exactly when damaging frost is around the corner. They use this information to decide when they will use water sprinklers to protect the crop.
- **57% of growers use cutting edge soil moisture monitoring equipment to determine when their crop needs irrigation.**
It is expected that the number of growers adopting this technology will increase in the next few years as the new tools are refined, and the growers are supporting research to make this happen.
- **And when in doubt, they consult the experts.**
69% of cranberry growers hire an independent crop consultant or integrated pest management (IPM) expert, trained and updated with the latest tools, to provide regular advice on crop and pest management.

Did you know?

Many people picture cranberries growing in water. Cranberry production beds are only flooded for brief periods of time, and in fact cranberry plants don't grow well if "their feet are too wet." Temporary floods are used to drown insect pests that aren't very good swimmers, to protect the plants during cold periods and during harvest.



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Valuing family and community...



- **Cranberry growers are community leaders.** 31% of growers report involvement in local service and civic organizations, and 28% serve as local community leaders, such as on school boards, local government committees and conservation commissions.
- **They support their neighbors.** The average cranberry marsh has 4.4 full-time employees and 7.9 part-time employees.
- **Cranberries are an integral part of the rural economy.** 81% buy their farm inputs from local sources within the state when available.



For more information, contact Jed Colquhoun: colquhoun@wisc.edu or (608) 890-0980

Dedicating themselves to being stewards of the land and the environment...

- **It's not just about the cranberries.** For every acre in cranberry production, a grower owns on average 6.3 acres that are conserved as wildlife habitat. A diversity of species, ranging from eagles to wolves, can often be seen around the marsh.
- **Over half of the growers have attended ecological education events in the past 3 years.** 52% have conducted on-farm research in collaboration with scientists, such as universities and cooperative extension.
- **There's always more to learn.** 64% of growers reported attending continuous education events in the past year that focused on farm, crop and ecosystem management.

