

Blueberries Tour 2014 A Cultivate Michigan Video Transcript

Hillary Bisnett: [Background Music] Cultivate Michigan is a campaign of the Michigan Farm to Institution Network. It's to ramp up farm to institution programs in our state and track progress. Cultivate Michigan is hosting this tour today at a blueberry farm and processing plant to bring more buyers out to the farm to learn about how foods are grown.

Barbara James Norman: I'm Barbara James Norman. I'm owner/operator of Barbara's Blueberry Batch here in Covert, Michigan. I'm third generation owner. My grandfather bought this land in 1929 and started blueberries in 56 and so it's very special to me. It's my passion and my goal or what I like to do is produce fresh, healthy blueberries and I like to get them from the farm to people as soon as possible. Currently my fresh frozen is going to Detroit Public Schools. I did the healthy snack project with Covert schools where we took fresh, healthy snacks into the elementary children for three years and I sell to a few stores in Chicago.

Shelly Hartmann: Well, my name is Shelly Hartmann and my husband, Dennis, and I are the owner and operators of True Blue Farms. I think that is kind of what makes us unique is that not only are we the grower, we're the packer, we're the shipper, and we're our own marketers so in this era it's really unique to find that. We understand the value of the relationship with the consumer, the end user, and the product that we're growing for them. We have unique relationships. We are big into the local programs so we work with locally the South Haven Public School System. We also work with the South Haven Community Hospital and we're open and we really try to cater to the school systems so that kids can get a healthy foundation for eating experience and they love blueberries! That's the nice part about it, the love it!

Christine Quane: What I love about this place is that it is the only processor that I've ever been to that's really processing just Michigan product and I think that's the most special thing about True Blue was that it is just Michigan and, you know, other processors of other specialty crops in Michigan need to understand that there's a market for our specialty crops and just Michigan specialty crops and that our institutions and our schools are really looking for just Michigan and that there's a market for it.

Norman: You know, you want to eat good, healthy food and it's just like when you go to the restaurant, you want everything to be perfect, 100%, and I want my blueberries, when they get to you I want you to be able to just take a bite in them and just smile.

Bisnett: If institutions want more information they can go to www.cultivatemichigan.org They can create their own institutional tracking dashboard and find other promotional and marketing materials.

