Do you LIKE blackcurrants?

Blackcurrants have their IBA facebook pages in English, French and German:

Blackcurrant – best berry for life

Cassis – petite baie contre stress et tensions

Cassis – lecker gesund

Do you like blackcurrants? Then you should like one of the pages!

There will soon be much more to read on facebook, much more to like, share and spread. Many messages are just waiting to be brought to the people, and facebook is an excellent way to get them through.

Hope to see you soon!

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.