NFFOODS Spectrum
perspectives on food technologies & business
ASIA

The James Hutton Institute introduces UKâ??s first bred blueberry

24 July 2025 | News

The new berry has been successfully trialled in the UK and the EU, constantly performing well across multiple seasons and diverse conditions



The new berry has been successfully trialled in the UK and the EU, constantly performing well across multiple seasons and diverse conditions

The James Hutton Institute is delighted to announce that it has successfully bred the UKâ??s first blueberry at its Invergowrie site.

Highland Charm is the result of 10 yearsâ?? research at the Huttonâ??s breeding programme, during which more than 300 unique blueberry crosses have been made and evaluated to find a selection bred from the native North American species (Vaccinium corymbosum) that can flourish in the Scottish climate.

Blueberry breeder, Dr Susan McCallum, said, â??This cultivar is a real standout. It combines high yields, excellent fruit size, outstanding flavour, with a balanced sugar-acid profile and a satisfying bite, and an impressive shelf life.

â??It is reliable and has performed well in our trials year after year, with consistent yield, size and taste. Growers are excited about it.â?•

The new berry has been successfully trialled in the UK and the EU, constantly performing well across multiple seasons and diverse conditions. Researchers are now exploring how the cultivar fares under different growing conditions and with reduced input systems, aligning with the industryâ??s goals for sustainability and efficiency.

The Hutton is an internationally renowned research centre whose breeding programme supports the entire fruit supply chain from growers to marketing organisations and retailers. The soft fruit group works extensively with stakeholders to carry out research proposals to address specific and targeted needs of the sector, using marker-assisted breeding to reduce the time it takes to produce cultivars with the key traits of interest.

It addresses challenges facing the industry, including improved means for pest and disease control that are in line with increasing demand for reduced pesticide use in agriculture, resistance to climate change and the rising cost of production.