

Blueberry wine has more antioxidants than many grape-based wines: study

February 2 2012, by Robert H. Wells

(Medical Xpress) -- Blueberry wine can provide more potentially healthy compounds than white wines and many red wines, according to a new University of Florida study.

Researchers with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences measured antioxidant content in a Florida-produced blueberry wine and compared it to published reports of antioxidant content in white and red wines made from grapes. Antioxidants are compounds that may offer cells protection from damaging molecules called free radicals.

The researchers found the Florida wine, produced from southern highbush blueberries, had more antioxidants than all of the reported white wine values and all but 20 percent of the reported values for red wines, which are considered high in antioxidants.

Wade Yang, a food science and human nutrition assistant professor with IFAS, led the research.

"For people seeking the potential health benefits of a glass of wine, blueberry wine is a comparable, and, in many instances, better alternative to grape wines," Yang said.

Blueberry production in Florida was valued at more than \$70 million in 2009 and is unique because the state's warm climate allows it to provide some of the first fresh blueberries on U.S. store shelves in the spring.

Wine production offers blueberry producers a market for extra berries they might not be able to sell due to slight imperfections or late ripening, said Jeff Williamson, an IFAS professor in horticultural sciences and fruit crop specialist.

“Growers are always looking for value-added products and ways to utilize all of their crop rather than just the part that might in this case, ripen at the right time and be of the right standards for fresh fruit,” Williamson said.

Florida’s blueberry wine industry is relatively small, Williamson said.

Yang’s team tested the antioxidant activity of the blueberry wine using a method known as oxygen radical absorbance capacity.

This was the first study that looked at antioxidants in wine from southern highbush blueberries, a variety commonly grown in Florida. Previous studies have examined the antioxidant content of wine from northern varieties, and found the values comparable to southern blueberry wine.

Dark fruit, such as blueberries, often indicates the presence of antioxidants. Many of these [antioxidants](#) are transferred from the juice, fruit and skins of the blueberries when they are fermented into wine.

A local blueberry wine producing company contributed \$5,000 to help fund the study. The research is published in this month’s issue of *Sustainable Agriculture Research*.

Provided by University of Florida

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