

Make Innovation HAPPEN

**MIH Knowledge Article:
The honeyberry: from Siberia with love**

Scotland
A LAND OF
food and drink

SCOTLAND
IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE

The logo consists of the word 'CAN' in white text on a vertical teal bar, and the word 'DO' in white text on a vertical yellow bar, positioned to the right of the teal bar.

Is it a blackberry? Is it a raspberry? No, it's a honeyberry, a haskap, a 'little present at the end of the branch,' and the buzz is, it's set to fly high in Scotland.

What is a honeyberry?

It may hail originally from Siberia, but this little superberry seems made for Scotland, and comes armed with growth opportunities for our food and drink sector. Able to flourish in temperatures up to -40c, and taking to our soil, this fruit is sure to soar in popularity.

The question is, could Scotland become a leading producer of premium honeyberries, particularly in the market for value-added products such as wine?

Canada's University of Saskatchewan, world leaders in the study of the honeyberry, has called it the berry of the future. How better to describe a fruit that can have hints of raspberry, aromas of blueberry, with perhaps a note of blackberry.

Some say it possesses the health attributes of the much-lauded acai and goji berries, and the Japanese find it so delicious, they call their variety haskap berries, meaning 'little presents on the end of the branch'.

Surely this fruit can only add exponentially to the growth of our soft fruit sector? An industry that's grown by 170% between 2003 and 2015. The strawberry sector alone grew by 220% over the same period, with blueberries and blackcurrants seeing growth of 190%. In 2015 the whole sector was worth £125 million.

So, can the honeyberry successfully rise through the fruit ranks?

Why honeyberries tick all the boxes

- Low production costs, simple cultivation, and extremely hardy in cold climates
- Long-lasting plant (20-30 years) and suitable for growing outside or in polytunnels
- Less labour-intensive harvesting
- First fruit in the season, (harvest is 14 days earlier than local strawberries)
- Ideal for value-added products like wine, jams, smoothies, juices, salad dressings, gins, beer, ice cream
- High in vitamin C, potassium, antioxidants, and polyphenols
- High in anthocyanins which may offer anti-inflammatory and other health benefits

Honeyberry production in Scotland

Scotland's first honeyberry orchard was planted in 2014 by major soft fruit growers Arbuckles. The company has continued to invest in the fruit, alongside their other fruit crops.

Its aim is to build a strong co-op with up to 1000 acres over 10 years. Arbuckles plan to collaborate with land and crop researchers from the James Hutton Institute, to explore honeyberry crop types, looking into their nutritional and commercial possibilities.

A fruit with business potential

Due to the current health and premium label trends, the honeyberry has a huge future, and could really establish itself in Scotland's booming soft fruit and superfruit market.

That, along with Scotland's ideal climate for the fruit, and its versatile usage, could potentially make Scotland a great place for honeyberry growing.

And with its potential for value-added products like wine and gin, (Strathearn Distillery having just launched its first honeyberry gin), offshoots of the honeyberry are already taking seed.

So, what next?

With the buzz around honeyberries looking to offer a hive of business opportunities for all kinds of Scottish enterprises, how can we help?

If you're interested in opportunities in the produce and health sector, or another part of the food and drink sector, our innovation team can help you realise your company's potential.

So, if you're looking to become more innovative and improve product development, your processes, or your workforce, then contact us and find out how we can help you make a real difference to your business.

Innovation support for Scottish food and drink companies

Make Innovation Happen is a single source of innovation support for businesses involved in the Scottish food and drink supply chain.

Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise work in partnership across academia, the public sector and the industry to deliver a comprehensive innovation support service.

Make Innovation Happen can help your business by providing:

- [Access to 'connectors'](#), who can offer support, advice and mentoring, as well as direction to appropriate support
- Ideas and insights on how to innovate through articles and events
- Funding through the [Collaborative Innovation Fund](#)
- Help to access other innovation services provided by Scottish Government, [Scottish Enterprise](#), Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Interface and others

To find out more about the support available, please get in touch with the Make Innovation Happen team:

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