



BeverageWorld

DECEMBER 15, 2000

BY MICHAEL...

Can blue be berry, berry good for tea?

Jersey Blues may sound like a rockin' new band, but it's actually a blueberry flavored iced tea, engineered at Rutgers University's Center for Advanced Food Technology (Piscataway, NJ). The company that owns Jersey Blues—Blueberry Health Inc.—is located in Hammonton, NJ, "The blueberry capital of the world," according to a sign that greets visitors when they reach the town.

"We plan to fight that other blue drink, Welch's," asserts Stan Cajigas, CEO of

Blueberry Health. "If we can take even a small part of their share..." Well, perhaps the rest will be history.

Since New Jersey blueberry growers produce more blueberries than any other state besides Michigan, they became very concerned when blueberry sales flattened out some 10 years ago. Reacting swiftly to find new markets for its product, the blueberry industry teamed with Rutgers University to engineer new blueberry products. The school's food

technology program came up with four applications—blueberry iced tea, blueberry sports drink, blueberry juice and blueberry pomace (a food spread)—and taste-tested them all. The tea won hands down.

A dozen or so growers joined forces and raised \$100,000 to produce 800 cases of the tea. Six months ago, the tea debuted at about 900 farm stands in New Jersey. And the drink got a lucky break. A major grocery store chain in the



We now know what they grow in the Garden State.

state asked Cajigas if he'd like to sell his product in its supermarkets.

And that's not all. "They're going to allow us to put the beverage in the produce section," says Cajigas. —Rachael Butler

Call Blueberry Health at 732/864-9574.