



CCARM goes on “Saskatour”

On May 31, the Manitoba Agri-Health Research Network Inc (MAHRN) and Eastern Plains Saskatoon Inc (EPSI) hosted the inaugural ‘SaskaTour’. Researchers from CCARM, U of Manitoba and the Food Development Centre joined Saskatoon berry growers and extension specialists to learn more about how the crop grows, the challenges associated with production and how the berries move from the field into the market.

The tour included stops at the Saskatoon Research Orchard in Stonewall, where a replicated variety trial has been established to identify well adapted Saskatoon berry cultivars, as well as a stop at a 7 acre commercial orchard near Warren. The tour concluded with a visit to the newly constructed EPSI processing facility, where the berries come

from the field and are cleaned and further processed for sale.

The Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) is Manitoba's 'super fruit'- high in antioxidants and loaded with flavour. Researchers and product development specialists at CCARM, Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals (RCFFN) and Food Development Centre (FDC) are working on a multi-year project funded under Growing Forward's Strategic Innovation Fund to characterize the functional food and nutraceutical uses of Manitoba grown and processed Saskatoon berries. The project goal is to maximize the value from the entire berry and evaluate the cardiovascular, kidney and general health effects of a Saskatoon berry powder. A powdered whole berry is an excellent way to incorporate Saskatoon berries into baked goods, beverages and dairy products. Not only does this expand the uses, it provides an opportunity for EPSI members to add value to the berries they cannot sell fresh.

Participants:

- Harold Aukema, University of Manitoba, Human Nutritional Sciences
- Heather Blewett, CCARM
- Dan Brown, CCARM
- Thomas Netticadan, CCARM
- Bram Ramjiawan, SBRC
- Miyoung Suh, CCARM
- Linda English, Innovation, Energy and Mines
- Ramachandran Gopal, Food Development Centre
- Gary Fulcher, U of Manitoba Food Science
- Meeling Nivet, Food Development Centre