

Michael Terrien  
Bluet Wild Blueberry Sparkling Wine  
LD 1670

AIIP funds awarded to BLUET Maine Wild Blueberry Sparkling Wine are designated for hauling berries, fermenting juice and improving quality in our mission to develop a new value-added product for Maine's wild blueberry farmers. Collaboration between growers and wineries is key to our mission and the application process in 2022 focused our mutual interests.

Continuing the funding of AIIP specifically for growers and producers will support the challenging and necessary development of alternative value-added products. For our emerging wine sector, each of the awardees in our ad-hoc coalition are meaningfully impacted by the infusion of grant-capital which provides security for engaging in this creative work. Ongoing funding opportunities through this very straightforward application process will help to stabilize the future of Maine's small wild blueberry family farms.

I cannot overstate the direct impact on our business of AIIP. I know the same is true for the others with whom we collaborate. Directing funds to the folks who work the fields is most important for sustaining agriculture and bolstering rural economies while supporting value-added product creators is an investment in expansion.