



For Immediate Release

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### **Kristen Fritz Kubiszak Honored by the White House and USDA**

*Naturipe Farms Blueberry Grower is selected as a "Champion of Change" for Agriculture*

Washington, D.C. July 30, 2014 – The White House and United States Department of Agriculture honored a select few new and beginning ranchers and farmers as "Champions of Change" during The Future of Agriculture two-day event this week. The events celebrated agriculture leaders from across the country who are taking innovative approaches to support American farming and ranching—both now and in the future, by showcasing their actions that ensure and advance the future of agriculture.

Kristin Fritz Kubiszak of Brookside Farms, a grower for MBG Marketing – The Blueberry People, was one of only 15 national honorees. Kristin is the retail manager for Brookside Farms located in Paw Paw, Michigan; her family is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation farm that distributes fresh blueberries through MBG's cooperative marketing network under the Naturipe® brand. After obtaining her Bachelor's degree in social work from Cornerstone University, Kristin returned home to her family farm that focuses on growing and packing top quality blueberries. Kristin's involvement in the agriculture industry doesn't stop with just her family farm; she also sits on the board of directors for the Van Buren County Farm Bureau as Chair of the Promotion and Education Committee. With this position she has dedicated her time to educating the community with trips to local schools, the Ag Venture tent at the local Youth Fair and other youth and consumer education programs. "Kristin is another member of the Fritz family farming operation that makes us proud that they are part of our MBG & Naturipe families." said Bob Hawk, President & CEO of MBG Marketing.

Kristin's primary goal is to educate, not only about agriculture, but also how families impact agriculture and how important it is to continue family farms. Brookside Farms started as a dairy farm in 1876 and Kristin's grandfather planted his first blueberry bush in 1956. That was the same year the family joined Michigan Blueberry Growers Association, a grower-owned cooperative, and the year Kristin's father, Bill Fritz, was born. Like his farming predecessors, he has continued the family tradition of active agricultural leadership, by serving on the Boards of both MBG Marketing and Naturipe Farms of which MBG is an owner/ partner. "We were absolutely delighted when we learned that Kristin was selected for this program" said Bill. "She is a wonderful representative of the next generation that has the desire and drive to continue our commitment to family farming and the broader agricultural community".

Kristin and the other honorees were congratulated by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack of the USDA and recognized at a ceremony in the White House by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden and Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council, Cecilia Munoz. They were given a tour of the First Lady's Garden at The White House by Sam Kass who is President Barack Obama's Senior Policy Advisor for Nutrition Policy and Let's Move Executive Director. "It was a true privilege to represent the blueberry industry as a Champion of Change. Since we grow blueberries which are known for their great flavor and incredible health attributes, I was especially pleased to learn first-hand about some of the efforts by the First Lady to encourage children to eat a healthy, brighter array of fresh fruits

and vegetables” said Kristin. “It was great to share the story our family blueberry farm. It has always been a passion of mine to educate others about what we do, and this was another great opportunity”.

To learn more about Kristin and the other “Champions of Change” visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions>.

*Naturipe Farms LLC is a grower-owned producer and international marketer of healthy, best tasting, premium berries. With production primarily from multi generation family farms, located in the prime berry growing regions throughout North and South America. The diverse grower base ensures year-round availability of “locally grown” and “in-season global” conventional and organic berries. Naturipe Farms, formed in 2000, is a partnership between MBG Marketing, Hortifrut SA, Naturipe Berry Growers and Munger Farms. With sales and customer service offices located strategically throughout the USA – (HQ) Salinas CA., Grand Junction MI., Estero FL., Boston MA., Wenatchee WA., Atlanta GA. For more information visit: [www.naturipefarms.com](http://www.naturipefarms.com) or <https://www.facebook.com/Naturipe>*

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