

Alberta Direct Market Average Berry & Vegetable Prices – 2016 / 2017

A number of farms contributed their pricing information, with a wide range in size, diversity and operational focus. As well, prices reported on producer websites were added into the pricing dataset, if they did not represent duplication. Some data was contributed by a visitor to several different farmers' markets.

Most prices are reported per pound (for fruit and most vegetables), however many fruit farms charge on a volume basis (often 4L pail or smaller containers for certain fruit e.g. raspberries) or on a per unit basis (for a number of vegetable crops – e.g. per head, per bag, per bunch). For the purposes of comparison, the price per pound was calculated assuming 5 pounds per pail for all fruit; however, the actual weight of fruit per volume can vary. In converting prices to a "per pound" basis, it was assumed that 1 pint is equal to 0.625 pounds. The price per pound varied according to the container size, with some producers offering a range of container sizes for some pre-picked fruit. In this case, an **average** price was generated to use in comparisons with other farms. In cases of vegetable pricing, producers reporting a price per pound for a product were compared with producers reporting similarly, whereas producers reporting in a price per unit were compared with other similar reported data. Data was not compared between reported weight and volume datasets. Where possible, the u-pick and the pre-pick (pre-picked on-farm sales and/or p-p farmer's market sales, etc.) prices are reported.

Many producers offer a volume discount (sometimes with several different prices for different volumes) or include a price adjustment for customers bringing pails/containers or charge a fee for pails. The average price discount or charge for a 4L pail was \$1. Some producers also make some price adjustments for early or late crops, depending on the crop.

Not all of the data contributed could be reported, as there was insufficient data to create a quality range &/or average. The number of data points comprising a dataset is included (e.g. n=x). If three or more data points were available, both a range and an average were reported. The higher the N-value, the stronger the data set. While the prices reported represent a range, there may be significant variation within the range. As a result, the median value was also included (for the fruit crops only), which represents the middle value of the dataset. Producers should consider their individual, specific costs of production, as well as their customers and markets when setting their prices. **Use the prices as a guide only**, and do not make adjustments to price, simply because you are lower than the average. In a number of areas, prices appear to be reaching the limit of what the market will bear, for the time being.

For the 2017 season, a number of producers were considering a price increase to account for increased costs of production (including labour, taxes, etc.). A number of producers are offering a range of prices and offerings, such as different volumes, fresh/frozen, washed/unwashed, delivered/pick up, etc., depending on the product.

Fruit Prices

Strawberries

Marketing Generalities	Strawberries were often sold on a U-pick basis; however producers are also selling pre-picked berries at the farmers' markets or on-farm. Volume of container was typically 4L pail/basket; however more, smaller container options are appearing (mainly for pre-picked product).					
	U-pick (n=9)			Pre-Pick (n=11)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.70 - \$5.0	\$3.61	\$3.35	\$4.0 - \$10.0	\$5.54	\$5.0
Comments	There did not tend to be a huge difference in price between pre-picked product that was sold on-farm and Farmers' market product.					

Raspberries

Marketing Generalities	Raspberries were most often U-picked, with some pre-picked (farm gate / farmer's market) sales. A number of farms did not pre-pick raspberries.					
	U-pick (n=11)			Pre-Pick (n=5)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.2 - \$5.56	\$3.67	\$3.85	\$4.0 - \$5.0	\$4.8	\$5.0
Comments	Prices per pound varied with container size. The labour of picking raspberries for sale can be significant.					

Saskatoon Berries						
Marketing Generalities	Saskatoon berries were often sold U-picked, however many farms offer pre-picked fruit. Pre-pick prices most often were more than u-pick prices, depending on the operation and how they were packaged. It was not always reported whether pre-picked sales were fresh or frozen, although it can be assumed that immediate sales were fresh, with later sales certainly frozen. Prices varied with different volumes of product sold. Value added product was not included, but would feature prominently in most operations.					
	U-pick (n=13)			Pre-Pick (n=15)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.0 - \$5.0	\$2.89	\$3.0	\$3.5 - \$6.0	\$4.42	\$4.0
Comments						
Sour Cherries						
Marketing Generalities	Limited prices reported					
	U-pick (n=4)			Pre-Pick (n=4)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.0 - \$5.0	\$3.0	\$2.5	\$2.0 - \$3.5	\$2.75	\$2.75
Comments	Equal number of u-pick versus pre-pick reported; In past years, some variation in price due to pitted versus not pitted. In some cases, there was a price difference depending on the type of sour cherry (related to quality, size, etc.)					
Haskap (Blue honeysuckle)						
Marketing Generalities	Limited prices reported. All were for u-pick. Many more acres coming on, with markets variable and specific to each producer.					
	U-pick (n=3)					
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)		Median (price per pound)		
	\$3.0 - \$5.0	\$4.5		\$5.0		
Comments						
Rhubarb						
Marketing Generalities	Limited prices reported.					
	U-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick (n=6)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.0 - \$2.5	\$2.21	\$2.13	\$2.0 - \$5.0	\$2.97	\$2.63
Comments	Prices varied quite a bit.					

Vegetable Prices

Beans	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (Farmers' Markets) (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.75 - \$2.3	\$2.1	\$2.5 - \$5.0	\$3.62	\$4.0 - \$6.0	\$4.67
Comments	Prices did not seem to vary between colour or type of bean sold.					
Beets	U-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick (n=4)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)		Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	
	\$1.5 - \$2.25	1.92		\$2.25 - \$4.0	\$3.03	
Comments	-					
Beets, bunched	Pre-pick (n=4)			Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=7)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)		Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	
	\$2.5 - \$4.0	\$3.2		\$1.5 - \$5.0	\$3.71	
Comments	-					
Carrots	U-pick (n=5)		Pre-Pick (n=7)		Pre-Pick (Farmers' Markets) (n=7)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.5 - \$2.5	\$1.95	\$0.75 - \$3.25	\$2.06	\$1.0 - \$4.0	\$2.51
Comments	Some price variation depending on time of year, product size (higher price for smaller) and package volume.					
Carrots (bunched)	Pre-picked (n=5)			Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=3)		
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)		Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	
	\$2.5 - \$3.75	\$3.02		\$3.0 - \$4.0	\$3.67	
Comments	-					
Cucumbers, Pickling	Pre-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick (n=3)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)		Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	
	\$1.5 - \$3.25	\$2.25		\$1.5 - \$2.0	\$1.83	
Comments	-					
Garlic (bulb/head)	U-pick			Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=3)		
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)		Range (price per unit)	Average (price per pound)	
	Too few reported	-		\$1.0 - \$4.0	\$2.67	
Comments	Size of head/bulb will vary.					
Kale	Pre-pick (n=4)			Pre-Pick (n=4)		
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)		Range (price per bag)	Average (price per bag)	
	\$5.78 - \$8.25	\$6.91		\$2.25 - \$3.0	\$2.67	
Comments	Unit size varied/					

Lettuce	Lettuce, Head – Pre-pick (Farmers' Market) (n=4)			Lettuce, Bagged – Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=8)		
	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)
	\$3.0 - \$3.5		\$3.13	\$2.0 - \$3.5		\$2.88
Comments	-					
Onions, Bulb	U-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick (n=4)		
	Range (price per pound)		Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)		Average (price per pound)
	\$1.13 - \$1.5		\$1.25	\$1.5 - \$1.89		\$1.76
Comments	-					
Onions, bulb (bunched)	U-pick			Pre-Pick (n=3)		
	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		-	\$1.68 - \$3.0		\$2.12
Comments	-					
Onions, Green	Pre-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=7)		
	Range (price per bunch)		Average (price per bunch)	Range (price per bunch)		Average (price per bunch)
	\$1.68 - \$2.50		\$1.98	\$0.75 - \$4.0		\$2.54
Comments	Size of bunch varied					
Peas	U-pick (n =3)		Pre-Pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=9)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$2.0 - \$2.5	\$2.17	\$3.5 - \$5.0	\$4.27	\$1.67 - \$6.5	\$3.64
Comments	-					
Potatoes, mature	U-pick (n=7)			Pre-Pick (n=12)		
	Range (price per pound)		Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)		Average (price per pound)
	\$0.80 - \$1.75		\$1.19	\$0.50 - \$2.5		\$1.64
Comments	Prices vary within season but also depending on volume (lower price for higher volumes)					
Potatoes, baby/new	U-pick (n =3)		Pre-Pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (Farmers' Market) (n=10)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.75 - \$2.0	\$1.92	\$2.0 - \$2.5	\$2.33	\$1.6 - \$3.5	\$2.42
Comments	-					
Pumpkins	U-pick (n=3)			Pre-Pick		
	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)
	\$1.5 - \$25.0		\$9.83	Too few reported		-
Comments	Price varies widely with size.					
Radish	Per pound – Pre-pick (n=3)			Bag/bunch – Pre-Pick (n=6)		
	Range (price per pound)		Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)		Average (price per unit)
	\$2.5 - \$3.0		\$2.73	\$0.75 - \$3.0		\$2.17
Comments	-					

Rutabaga	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported	-	\$0.75 - \$3.0	\$2.17
Comments	-			
Spinach	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=6)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported	-	\$2.0 - \$8.38	\$5.7
Comments	-			
Swiss Chard	Per pound – Pre-pick (n=5)		Bagged – Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$3.0 - \$7.54	\$5.19	\$2.0 - \$2.93	\$2.48
Comments	Sold in a range of package sizes, bunches, etc.			
Zucchini	Per pound – Pre-pick (n=3)		Each – Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$2.0 - \$2.1	\$2.07	\$1.0 - \$3.0	\$2.06
Comments	Size of unit varies			

2017 Growing Season – Prices Changes / Adjustments

For the 2017 growing season, many producers were increasing their prices slightly, typically due to factors such as increased input costs, labour costs, taxes, etc. Price changes tend to be minimal and often can after holding prices the previous year. Similar to previous years, price increases (or lack of increase) were scattered across the province and varied considerably. Some producers shift prices throughout the growing season, as influenced by supply, demand and/or rarity of a particular product, particularly in reference to early harvests.

Producers continue to vary in how they charge for fruit, with many charging per pound, but a fair number charging a flat rate for a fixed container (volume) size, typically small volume containers (e.g. pint). Price per pound was more common in the vegetables; however it depended very much on the type of vegetable. U-pick was less common than pre-pick in the data reported again this year. Pre-picked fruit product sold at the Farmers' markets was typically sold in containers by volume, but that varied. Per unit pricing of vegetables was likely due to simplicity of marketing and packaging, rather than having to deal with wide ranges of weights.

Most producers charge for pails / containers or provide a discount to customers that bring their own containers. It was mentioned regularly that a charge for containers would be added for u-pickers (noted on numerous websites). More common this year was the addition of a per head charge for entry to an orchard, regardless of volume/quantity picked. Some refer to this as a grazing fee.

A number of u-pick pricing was dependant on the number of pails picked/purchased and vegetable sale prices were usually dependant on the quantity purchased. Some producers charge for a delivery service if that is something that they provide. On-line orders/sales option is appearing on a number of producer websites; however the details of this were not delved into.

The number of Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) operations continues to increase, with many direct market operations offering this as an option in addition to their other direct market delivery channels (e.g. u-pick, FM). In many cases, this is the only option that is provided. The cost of the various products compared to other market channels is difficult to compare and CSA share prices vary greatly, both in terms of price and the number of weeks that are available.

It is evident that great care and attention must be given to input costs, cost of labour, transportation and to what prices the market will bear, related to other producers, retail pricing, etc.