

Alberta Direct Market Average Berry & Vegetable Prices – 2017 / 2018

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.

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 (either built into the price or charged on top). The most common charge for a 4L pail was \$1-2. Some producers also make some price adjustments for early or late crops, depending on the crop, or things like baby or mature crops (e.g. carrots or potatoes)

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 2018 season, a number of producers are considering price increases to account for increased costs of production (most often labour was cited, however other costs like taxes, etc. were considered). 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=13)			Pre-Pick (n=11)			Pre-Pick FM (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)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Median (price per pound)
	\$2.80 - \$8.00	\$3.87	\$3.35	\$4.00 - \$5.99	\$4.75	\$4.75	\$4.56 - \$6.50	\$5.76	\$6.00
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=12)			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)
	\$2.60 – \$5.56	\$3.96	\$3.80	Too few reported		
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=11)			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)
	\$2.40 - \$5.00	\$3.18	\$3.00	\$3.75 - \$5.2	\$4.48	\$4.45
Comments	-					
Other Fruit						
Insufficient data was received for other fruit, such as sour cherries, haskap, chokecherries, apples, black currants, and rhubarb.						

Vegetable Prices

Beans	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=7)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$2.00 - \$4.00	\$2.77	\$2.80 - \$7.00	\$5.35
Comments	Prices did not seem to vary between colour or type of bean sold.			
Beets	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=8)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.5 - \$2.50	\$2.17	\$2.00 - \$3.50	\$2.55
Comments	-			
Broccoli	Pre-pick (per pound) (n=3)		Pre-Pick (per head) (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$1.50 - \$5.00	\$3.51	\$2.00 - \$4.00	\$3.00
Comments	-			
Brussels Sprouts	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reports		\$2.00 - \$6.00	\$4.33
Comments	-			
Cabbage	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reports		\$0.40 - \$1.00	\$0.69
Comments	-			

Carrots	U-pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (n=17)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.75 - \$2.50	\$2.06	\$1.20 - \$6.00	\$3.00
Comments	Some price variation depending on time of year, product size (higher price for smaller) and package volume.			
Cauliflower	U-pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$3.00 - \$4.00	\$3.25	\$3.00 - \$5.00	\$3.80
Comments	-			
Celery	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$2.50 - \$3.00	\$2.83	\$3.00 - \$4.00	\$3.50
Comments	-			
Corn, sweet	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=6)	
	Range (price per dozen)	Average (price per dozen)	Range (price per dozen)	Average (price per dozen)
	Too few reported	-	\$8.50 - \$12.00	\$11.42
Comments	-			

Cucumber, Pickling	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=9)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported		\$2.00 - \$3.50	\$2.79
Comments	-			
Cucumber, slicing	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		\$1.00 - \$3.00	\$1.80
Comments	-			
Garlic (head/bulb)	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		\$2.99 - \$4.00	\$3.58
Comments	-			
Greens, mixed	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		\$2.00 - \$3.50	\$3.00
Comments	-			
Herbs, misc.	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		\$2.00 - \$3.00	\$2.40
Comments	-			

Lettuce, bagged	U-pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (n=6)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$2.00 - \$3.00	\$2.50	\$2.50 - \$5.00	\$3.50
Comments	-			
Lettuce, Romaine	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		\$3.00 - \$5.00	\$3.63
Comments	-			
Onions	Onions, Storage – Pre-Pick (n=6)		Onions, Sweet, Spanish – Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.00 - \$2.50	\$2.04	\$1.00 - \$2.99	\$2.16
Comments	-			
Onions, Green	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=8)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Average (price per bunch)	Average (price per bunch)
	Too few reported		\$1.90 - \$5.00	\$2.86
Comments	-			
Parsnips	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=6)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported		\$2.50 - \$7.00	\$4.31
Comments	-			

Peas	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$2.00 - \$4.00	\$2.75	\$2.00 - \$7.50	\$5.42
Comments	-			
Potatoes, mature	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=6)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$0.80 - \$2.00	\$1.43	\$0.80 - \$2.00	\$1.48
Comments	-			
Potatoes, baby	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=9)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$1.75 - \$2.00	\$1.92	\$2.00 - \$3.00	\$2.72
Comments	-			
Pumpkins	U-pick (n=4)		Pre-Pick (n=3)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$1.25 - \$25.0	\$7.69	\$1.5 - \$3.00	\$2.42
Comments	Price varies widely with size.			

Radish, bag/bunch	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		\$2.00 - \$2.25	\$2.08
Comments	-			
Rutabaga	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		\$0.50 - \$1.50	\$1.15
Comments	-			
Spinach	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported		\$3.00 - \$9.20	\$6.14
Comments	Weight of product (packaged) varied widely			
Squash	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported		\$2.75 - \$4.00	\$3.19
Comments	Range of different types of squash grown – they did not appear to be priced differently based on type			
Swish Chard	U-pick (n=3)		Pre-Pick (n=8)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	\$2.00 - \$5.00	\$3.00	\$2.00 - \$ 5.00	\$3.38
Comments	-			
Zucchini	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=8)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)
	Too few reported	-	\$1.00 - \$3.00	\$1.68
Comments	-			

2018 Growing Season – Prices Changes / Adjustments

For the 2018 growing season, many producers are increasing their prices slightly, typically due to factors such as increased input costs, labour costs, taxes, etc. Price changes for some producers are as much as 10-20 percent, however not all producers are making changes at this time. 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. Per unit pricing of vegetables was likely due to simplicity of marketing and packaging, rather than having to deal with wide ranges of weights. It was more common for producers to report charges for pails / containers or to list some other sort of fee for u-pick situations. It was mentioned regularly that a charge for containers would be added for u-pickers (noted on numerous websites). Some of the u-pick operations priced based on the number of pails picked/purchased and vegetable sale prices were usually dependant on the quantity purchased.

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.

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.