

## Alberta Direct Market Average Berry & Vegetable Prices – 2013 / 2014

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.

Most prices are reported per pound (for fruit and most vegetables), however many farms charge on a volume basis (often 4L pail) 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, 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. While the prices reported represent a range, there may be significant variation within the range. 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 2014 season, some producers are considering a price increase, due to increased production, transportation, and/or labour costs, whereas others are maintaining their price. 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

<b>Marketing Generalities</b>	Strawberries were usually often sold on a U-pick basis, however many more producers are 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).					
	<b>U-pick (n=12)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (On-farm or unspecified) (n=16)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (Farmers’ Market) (n=6)</b>	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$2.60 - \$5.30	\$3.59	\$4.00 - \$7.75	\$4.83	\$4.40 - \$9.00	\$5.80
<b>Comments</b>	Most producers were closer to \$4.00 per pound for Pre-pick and up to \$5 or more at FM. Prices varied with the size of the container that they are sold in, with most producers offering various sizes. There did not tend to be a huge difference in price between pre-picked product that was sold on-farm and Farmers’ market product. Some product delivery systems were in place in some areas.					

#### Raspberries

<b>Marketing Generalities</b>	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			
	<b>U-pick (n=14)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=8)</b>	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	\$2.25 - \$5.50	\$3.51	\$3.00 - \$8.75 (mostly fresh; most FM)	\$5.37
<b>Comments</b>	Prices varied with container size, often being sold in pint or smaller volume containers, which significantly elevates the price per pound (and returns).			

### Saskatoon Berries

<b>Marketing Generalities</b>	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 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.			
	<b>U-pick (n=10)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=17)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	\$2.40 - \$4.50	\$2.80	\$2.50 - \$5.25	\$3.80
<b>Comments</b>	U-pick prices were typically well over \$2/pound and most producers were around \$3.50 or more for pre-picked berries			

### Black Currants

<b>Marketing Generalities</b>	Most prices were reported from u-pick.			
	<b>U-pick (n=3)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	\$2.40 - \$4.50	\$3.37	-	-
<b>Comments</b>	Other coloured currants and gooseberries similar pricing, but limited volumes			

### Sour Cherries

<b>Marketing Generalities</b>	Most prices were reported from u-pick, some pre-picked.			
	<b>U-pick (n=3)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	\$2.50 - \$4.50	\$3.33	-	-
<b>Comments</b>	Some price variation for pre-picked product, pitted versus un-pitted. Pricing is still difficult to determine, with few producers reporting in Alberta.			

### Other Fruit

More "alternative" fruit are coming onto the market, includes Haskap (Blue Honeysuckle / "Honeyberries") and sour cherries. Other fruit includes chokecherries, rhubarb, etc.				
<b>Haskap / Blue Honeysuckle</b>	Sold U-pick or occasionally pre-picked, with a limited quantity available. Pricing is still very exploratory at this point and too few producers reported prices to report.			
<b>Chokecherries</b>	Prices weren't reported in any quantity, but are typically similar to those of Saskatoon berries.			
<b>Rhubarb</b>	Prices were reported in limited numbers, but rhubarb tends to be sold as pre-picked, with prices ranging from \$0.75 - \$3.00/lb, and an average price of \$1.63/lb (n=4). Some rhubarb is sold by piece.			
<b>Other fruit (e.g. gooseberries, apples, crabapples, etc.)</b>	Wide range of prices reported. There were too few numbers to report for any one crop. Prices are typically per pound, most often u-pick.			

### Vegetable Prices

	<b>U-pick (n=4)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=4)</b>	
<b>Beans</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	1.75-3.33	2.36	\$1.80 - \$4.00	\$3.01
<b>Comments</b>	In general, prices were reported per pound, with some different package sizes offered.			

<b>Beets</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=7)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$1.50 - \$3.00	\$2.15
<b>Comments</b>	Some with greens, some pre-picked not specifying destination market. Often a discount for larger quantities. Lower prices represent bulk / larger volume discount.			
<b>Carrots</b>	<b>U-pick (n=3)</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=10)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	\$1.00 - \$1.50	\$1.30	\$1.63 - \$4.00	\$2.82
<b>Comments</b>	Some price variation depending on time of year, product size (higher price for smaller) and package volume.			
<b>Corn, sweet</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=4)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per dozen)</b>	<b>Average (price per dozen)</b>	<b>Range (price per dozen)</b>	<b>Average (price per dozen)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$8.00 - \$9.00	\$8.25
<b>Comments</b>	Some sales per cob (resulting in higher cost per dozen), but most per dozen. Most priced closer to \$8/doz.			
<b>Ornamental Gourds</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=3)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per unit)</b>	<b>Average (price per unit)</b>	<b>Range (price per unit)</b>	<b>Average (price per unit)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$1.63 - \$3.00	\$2.13
<b>Comments</b>	-			
<b>Onions</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=3)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$1.50 - \$2.00	\$1.83
<b>Comments</b>	-			
<b>Parsnips</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=4)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	-	-	\$2.00 - \$5.97	\$3.31
<b>Comments</b>	-			
<b>Peas</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=5)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$2.00 - \$4.00	\$3.23
<b>Comments</b>	Most pre-picked over \$3/lb, but prices varied.			
<b>Peas, Snap</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=4)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$3.50 - \$4.75	\$4.06
<b>Comments</b>	Pre-picked prices at FM higher than on-farm, but pre-picked prices varied, with most over \$4+			
<b>Potatoes, mature</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=6)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$1.00 - \$2.50	\$1.55
<b>Comments</b>	Prices vary within season but also depending on volume (lower price for higher volumes).			
<b>Potatoes, Baby/New</b>	<b>U-pick</b>		<b>Pre-Pick (n=5)</b>	
	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>	<b>Range (price per pound)</b>	<b>Average (price per pound)</b>
	Too few reported	-	\$2.00 - \$3.00	\$2.39
<b>Comments</b>	Prices tend to change (drop) as season progresses. Some volume discounts. FM higher than on-farm.			

Spinach	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported	-	\$6.40 - \$12.00	\$9.78
Comments	Pre-pick prices significantly higher, typically due to smaller volume packages (1/4 pound or 6-10 oz.)			
Swiss Chard	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=4)	
	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)	Range (price per pound)	Average (price per pound)
	Too few reported	-	\$2.70 - \$11.00	\$5.68
Comments	Wide range in prices and package sizes.			
Zucchini	U-pick		Pre-Pick (n=5)	
	Range (price per unit)	Average (price per unit)	Range (price per unit - each)	Average (price per unit - each)
	Too few reported	-	\$0.75 - \$3.00	\$1.45
Comments	Some price differences for larger or smaller products.			

### 2014 Growing Season – Prices Changes / Adjustments

For the 2014 growing season, the majority of producers appeared to be considering price increases for the various crops they grow, with those increases being typically due to factors such as increased input costs, etc. All price changes were very minor. 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. 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. Pre-picked fruit product sold at the Farmers' markets was typically sold in containers by volume. Sales of small volume containers or packaging resulted in a much higher price per pound (when compared to larger volumes). 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. 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.

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.

### MENTAL SNACKTIME

"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often." – Winston Churchill

"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad." – C. S. Lewis

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." – Maya Angelou

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." – Reinhold Niebuhr