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2020 New York Berry Price Information

Zoey Yang
Kristen S. Park
Miguel I. Gómez

Department of Applied Economics and Management
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 14853-7801 USA

Acknowledgement

Cornell's Food Industry Management Program, with funding from the NYS Berry Growers Association, conducted the biennial berry pricing study for New York commercial berry growers. The survey collected 2020 price information so commercial growers can make future pricing decisions.

We gratefully acknowledge the help from all the berry growers who participated in the survey and for the funding from the New York State Berry Growers Association that made this project possible. This study was originally developed and conducted by Marvin Pritts, Professor, School of Integrative Plant Science Horticulture Section, Cornell University.

Farm demographics

We want to thank all the growers who took the time to complete the survey. Ninety-nine farms currently producing berries completed the survey. Although the number of returned surveys was lower when compared to the previous study conducted in 2018, the results are robust. The distribution of respondents according to type of production practice, conventional versus organic (Table 1), as well as berry acreage (Table 2) was very similar to the 2018 respondents and can be compared with the previous survey results from 2018.

Table 1: Number of Survey Respondents, 2006 through 2018

	2009	2012	2018	2020
	number of respondents			
Total growers	162	117	117	99
Conventional	157	97	87	78
Organic	5	12	30	22
Counties represented	48	37	45	37

Note: Conventional plus organic totals more than 99 due to operations with both conventional and organic production

The berry farm respondents are from 37 counties spread the width and breadth of the state. The average berry acreage was 9 acres and the average total farm size 177 acres. The size distribution of berry acres is similar to that from the 2018 survey.

Table 2. Respondents' Berry Acreage

Respondents' berry acres	2018	2020
	% of respondents	
<1 acres	21	21
1 to 3 acres	28	20
4 to 6 acres	20	21
7 to 10 acres	11	9
11 to 20 acres	14	15
>20 acres	6	12
Total	100	100

While many berry growers (47.5%) grew only one berry variety, some growers (20.2%) grew four or more varieties (Table 3). June-bearing strawberries and day-neutral strawberries are calculate in the table as different varieties, as are summer and fall raspberries.

Table 3. Number of Berry Varieties Grown by Respondents

Number of berry varieties grown on farms	2018	2020
	% of respondents	
1	47	48
2 or more	53	52
Total	100	100

More respondents grew blueberries than any other berry variety, followed by June-bearing strawberries, summer raspberries, fall raspberries, blackberries, and day-neutral strawberries (Table 4). Thirteen percent of growers produced other berry types, including aronia berries, currants (black and red), gooseberries, honeyberries, juneberries, black raspberries, and saskatoon berries.

Table 4. Percent of Respondents Producing Different Berry Varieties

Berry variety	% of respondents
Blueberries	77.8
Strawberries-June bearing	41.4
Strawberries-day neutral	10.1
Raspberries-summer	39.4
Raspberries-fall	15.2
Blackberries	16.2
Other varieties	13.1

A large majority of our respondents farmed other crops in addition to berries, with a few farms having over a couple hundred acres (Table 5). When we look at farm size by conventional versus organic farms, and we see that over one quarter of organic respondents farm less than 20 acres.

Table 5. Farm Size of Survey Respondents

Total Farm Size	All farms	Conventional	Organic
		% of respondents	
<20 acres	19.6	16.9	28.6
21 to 40 acres	9.8	9.9	9.5
41 to 60 acres	15.2	14.1	19.0
61 to 80 acres	6.5	5.6	9.5
81 to 100 acres	13.0	14.1	9.5
101 to 200 acres	16.3	16.9	14.3
>201 acres	19.6	22.5	9.5

Spending on pandemic supplies in 2020

In addition to growing and marketing berries in 2020, growers also had to, and still have to, comply with additional regulations to keep farms, workers, and customers safe from the COVID-19 virus.

Therefore, in addition to questions about berry prices, the survey also asked growers, "How much did you spend on assuring COVID-19 safety compliance? (For example, extra labor costs for keeping social distancing or cleaning supplies)"

In Table 6 below we see that almost 20% of respondents did not spend any extra money on safety compliance. One reason may be because the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets made sanitizer and masks available to farms that needed them. The majority of farms (60.8%) spent between $1 - $1,000 on compliance measures, 30% spent less than $250 and 30% spent $250-$1,000.

We also see in Table 6 the expenditures by production method, conventional versus organic. The expenditure category most frequently checked by conventional farms was $250-$1,000, while the category for organic farms was < $250. Although more organic farms (33.3%) spent $0 on safety measures than did conventional farms, more organic farms (5.6%) also spent more. We believe the differences are likely slight and not significant.

Table 6. Safety Compliance Expenditures for COVID-19 in 2020

Covid-19 expenditures	All farms	Conventional	Organic
		% of respondents	
No extra money spent	19.6	16.2	33.3
< $250	30.4	28.4	38.9
$250 - $1000	30.4	33.8	16.7
$1000 - $2500	10.9	13.5	0.0
$2500- $5000	3.3	4.1	0.0
$5000-$10,000	3.3	2.7	5.6
>$10000	2.2	1.4	5.6

Last year's COVID-19 safety precautions remain in place. Farms need to keep in touch with your cooperative extension office or your local health department for any new or revised health safety standards for the 2021 season.

Each berry farm has its own operations and market channels, whether u-pick, farm stand, wholesale, or other. We applaud all those who have been working hard through this past year, and thank you for providing everyone with the fruits of your labor.

Berry prices

Most respondents sold berries through u-pick (80.3%) as well as various retail channels (76%), such as farmers markets, farm stores and stands (Table 7).

Table 7: Percent of Respondents Using Various Marketing Channels

Marketing Strategy	2009	2012	2018	2020
		% of respondents		
U-pick (pick your own)	43.2	63.2	79.5	80.3
Wholesale	24.1	33.3	40.2	40.6
Retail	50.0	70.9	76.1	76.8
Value Added	14.2	18.8	22.2	29.3

*A farm is counted as having participated in retail operations if they participated in one or more of the following; farm store, fruit stand, farmers market, or other retail practices

Prices for four major berry crops, strawberries, blueberries, brambles, and ribes, and sold through various market channels, including u-pick, wholesale, and retail (farmers market, farm stores and stands, retail stores, and online orders) were gathered (Table 8).

U-pick and wholesale prices for almost all berry types, the exception being blackberries, increased in 2020. Interestingly, retail prices, an average of all types of retail including farm store, farmers market, sales to retailers, and online sales, dropped from 2018. Whether the pattern of price increases in u-pick and wholesale and decrease in retail were a result of market pressures from the pandemic is uncertain.

Table 8: Average Price per Pound, 2018 Versus 2020

Berry	2006	2009	2012	2018	2020	**2018-2020 price change**
Blueberries		*average price $ per pound*				*$*
U-pick	1.49	2.21	2.17	2.83	2.89	0.06
Wholesale	2.39	2.99	3.08	3.44	3.64	0.20
Retail	3.88	4.21	4.84	5.41	5.19	(0.22)
Strawberries						
U-pick	1.32	1.76	2.07	2.68	3.2	0.52
Wholesale	2	2.3	2.34	2.74	3.26	0.52
Retail	2.38	3.4	3.72	5.11	4.24	(0.87)
Raspberries-summer						
U-pick	2.72	4.12	3.92	4.14	4.87	0.73
Wholesale	5.04	4.33	6.14	4.84	5.84	1.00
Retail	7.09	5.31	7.32	8.11	8.54	0.43
Raspberries-fall						
U-pick	2.99	3.88	3.81	4.54	4.76	0.22
Wholesale	5.21	4.79	5.53	5.91	6.6	0.69
Retail	6.93	6.54	7.66	8.74	7.89	(0.85)
Blackberries						
U-pick	NA	3.89	4.45	4.69	5.36	0.67
Wholesale	NA	4.69	5.58	5.72	5.43	(0.29)
Retail	NA	6.26	7.07	7.94	8.05	0.11

* Retail is an average across all retail outlets, including farmers markets, farm stores and stands, retail stores, and online orders

Conventional versus organic prices

We compared prices of conventional berries to organic berries (Table 9) and see some strong differences depending on the berry type. The u-pick prices for blueberries, strawberries, and summer raspberries were quite similar, but their wholesale prices were significantly higher.

We did not have enough fall raspberry observations or blackberry u-pick observations to report these prices.

Table 9. 2020 Prices of Conventional Berries versus Organic Berries

Berry	Conventional	Organic	Difference*
	average price $ per pound		*$*
Blueberries			
U-pick	2.83	3.18	0.35
Wholesale	3.22	5.02	1.80
Retail	5.00	5.97	0.97
Strawberries			
U-pick	3.16	3.48	0.31
Wholesale	2.82	5.02	2.20
Retail	5.25	5.54	0.29
Summer Fruiting Raspberries			
U-pick	4.86	4.90	0.04
Wholesale	5.47	6.88	1.41
Retail	8.13	10.00	1.87
Fall-Fruiting Raspberries			
U-pick	5.10	NA	NA
Wholesale	7.00	NA	NA
Retail	8.82	NA	NA
Blackberries			
U-pick	5.36	NA	NA
Wholesale	5.72	6.00	0.28
Retail	7.94	8.68	0.74

* Difference = organic average price – conventional average price

Other berries

Information about sales of "other" berries was also collected; however, the number of responses from those growing these specialty berries was not large enough to report prices for each berry type. Prices were averaged across the specialty berry types and show in Table 10.

Table 10. Prices of Other Berry Types

Other berries	2020 average price per pound
	$
U-pick	4.43
Wholesale	7.41
Retail	7.69

Price details

The average berry prices in Table 8 above reveal general changes in the average prices from 2018 and 2021. We can also examine the current year's minimum and maximum prices received by growers by market channel to see what they might reveal about pricing opportunities.

Table 11 below reveals the price ranges for berries sold through the market channels. Factors that may explain some of the differences between the minimum and maximum prices reported include:

- Farm location – farms located in more urban settings or in metro areas will have opportunities to charge more for their products. Higher prices might also be possible in high traffic, tourist areas. And higher prices might also be needed in areas where the costs of living and farming are greater.
- Production method – organic methods of production may be more expensive and certainly are rewarded with greater prices. In addition, berries produced in protected environments, such as high tunnels, can grow and ripen earlier than field produced berries and frequently can command higher prices before supplies increase during the height of the growing season.
- Berry variety – day-neutral strawberries can sometimes command a price premium as they can be produced off-season when field-grown berries are low or non-existent. Specialty or novel berries may also command a premium if the farm is located in an area where consumers are eager to try new and interesting berries.
- Farm services – services such as containers, baskets, or flats available to customers or even available bathroom facilities might lead a farm to consider paying for the services through slightly higher prices.

Table 11. 2020 Berry Price Ranges

	Prices per pound		
Blueberries	Average	Minimum	Maximum
U-pick	2.89	1.50	7.00
Wholesale	3.64	1.70	6.67
Retail	5.28	2.50	8.00
Farm store/stand	5.03	2.50	10.00
Farmers market	5.32	3.33	8.00
Online	5.65	4.50	6.50
Strawberries	Average	Minimum	Maximum
U-pick	3.20	2.00	7.00
Wholesale	3.26	1.50	8.75
Retail	5.20	2.50	14.50
Farm store/stand	5.02	2.75	15.00
Farmers market	5.84	2.75	14.50
Online	8.40	4.00	12.00
Raspberries	Average	Minimum	Maximum
U-pick	4.85	2.50	8.00
Wholesale	9.04	2.00	14.50
Retail	9.04	4.25	14.50
Farm store/stand	8.79	4.00	15.00
Farmers market	8.19	4.00	16.00
Online	-	-	-
Blackberries	Average	Minimum	Maximum
U-pick	5.36	4.50	8.00
Wholesale	5.43	2.00	8.00
Retail	8.05	3.00	14.50
Farm store/stand	8.24	3.50	14.50
Farmers market	7.71	5.00	10.00
Online	-	-	-
Other berries	Average	Minimum	Maximum
U-pick	4.38	2.50	8.00
Wholesale	7.41	4.00	12.00
Retail	7.41	3.33	15.00
Farm store/stand	8.77	3.33	15.00
Farmers market	6.37	3.00	12.00
Online	-	-	-

Summary

The total number of growers participating in the 2020 berry pricing survey dropped slightly from 2018; however, berry farm demographics, such as acreage, berry types, and representation across

numerous counties in the state stayed the same. Approximately 62% of respondents reported growing berries on less than or equal to 6 acres.

The survey results indicate the prices of berries in New York State increased across most marketing channels for each berry, although some exceptions exist. This is important to note as the entire berry season took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, approximately 80% of the farms reported having increased expenses to comply with the pandemic safety measures.

The prices that growers received ranged greatly. These likely depended on many factors, but producers selling their berries at a price significantly less than the average sales price found in the report may want to re-evaluate their prices. Data collected since 2006 show a large amount of producers are pricing their berries significantly lower than the average prices found in the state. If demand, as well as local market indicators, suggest the seller could increase their sales prices they are advised to do so. By selling crops at a significantly lower price than the average state price/lb. it is difficult for producers to receive fair compensation for their work.

Thank you to all NYS Commercial berry growers who responded to the 2020 pricing survey. We hope this information is valuable to you as you calculate your price for the future seasons. Thank you again!

OTHER A.E.M. EXTENSION BULLETINS

EB No	Title	Fee (if applicable)	Author(s)
2021-03	2020 New York Berry Price Information		Yang, Z., Park, K.S., and Gómez, M.I.
2021-02	Central NY Farmland Cash Rental Rate Survey Findings		Ifft, J., and Tommell, N.
2021-01	"Six Year Trend Analysis 2019, New York State Dairy Farms, Selected Financial and Production Factors", Dairy Farm Business Summary		Karszes, J. and Augello, L.
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2020-16	The Covid-19 Shopper: Food Preparation Changes		Park, K., Brumberg, A., and Yonezawa, K.
2020-15	The Covid-19 Shopper: Shopping Habits during Covid-19		Park, K., Brumberg, A., and Yonezawa, K.
2020-14	The Covid-19 Shopper: Online Shopping		Park, K., Brumberg, A., and Yonezawa, K.
2020-13	Enterprise Tool for Eastern United States Small Vineyard Management		Davis, T. J., and Gómez, M. I.
2020-12	Broccoli Production Enterprise Budgets		Davis, T.J. and Gomez, M. I.
2020-11	Cost of Establishment and Development of Concord Grapes in the Lake Erie Region of New York - 2020		Davis, T.J., Gómez, M.I., and Martin, K.
2020-10	Six Year Trend Analysis 2018, New York State Dairy Farms, Selected Financial and Production Factors		Karszes, J., and Skellie, J.
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