

Results from the 2020 Berry Prices Survey

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Cornell's Food Industry Management Program, with funding by the NYS Berry Growers Association, has results from the 2020 berry pricing survey for New York commercial berry growers. The survey collected 2020 price information so commercial growers can make pricing decisions for their upcoming season.

We want to thank all the growers who took the time to complete the survey. One hundred farms completed the survey. Although the number of returned surveys was down somewhat, 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 we feel very comfortable comparing the 2020 results with the previous survey in 2018.

Table 1: Number of survey respondents, 2006 through 2018

	2006	2009	2012	2018	2020
Total growers	48	162	117	117	100*
Conventional growers	--	157	97	87	79
Organic growers	--	5	12	30	22
Counties represented	34	48	37	45	37

*Does not equal conventional plus organic growers as one grower had both conventional and organic berries.

The berry farm respondents grow in 37 counties spread across the width and breadth of the state. The average berry acreage was 9 acres and the average total farm size 174 acres. The size distribution of berry acres is roughly equal to that from the 2018 survey.

Table 2. Distribution of Berry Farms by Berry Acreage

Number of berry acres	2018	2020	2020
	<i>% distribution</i>	<i>number of respondents</i>	<i>% distribution</i>
<1 acres	21%	21	21%
1 to 3 acres	28%	20	20%
4 to 6 acres	20%	21	21%
7 to 10 acres	11%	9	9%
11 to 20 acres	14%	15	15%
>20 acres	6%	12	12%
Number of observations	100%	98	100%

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 3: Average price per pound, 2018 versus 2020

	2018	2020	Difference
	<i>average price</i>	<i>average price</i>	
Blueberries			
U-pick	2.83	2.89	0.06
Wholesale	3.44	3.64	0.20
Retail	5.41	5.19	(0.22)
Strawberries			
U-pick	2.68	3.20	0.52
Wholesale	2.74	3.26	0.52
Retail	5.11	4.24	(0.87)
Summer Fruiting Raspberries			
U-pick	4.14	4.87	0.73
Wholesale	4.84	5.84	1.00
Retail	8.11	8.54	0.43
Fall-Fruiting Raspberries			
U-pick	4.54	4.76	0.22
Wholesale	5.91	6.60	0.69
Retail	8.74	7.89	(0.85)
Blackberries			
U-pick	4.69	5.36	0.67
Wholesale	5.72	5.43	(0.29)
Retail	7.94	8.05	0.11

We compared prices of conventional berries to organic berries (Table 4) 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 4. Prices of Conventional Berries Versus Organic Berries

	Conventional	Organic	Difference*
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

* Organic average price – Conventional average price

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 5.

Table 5. Prices of Other Berry Types

Other berries	2020 average price
U-pick	4.43
Wholesale	NA
Retail	7.69

NA = Insufficient responses to be able to report

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