

2015 NARBA Berry Pricing Survey

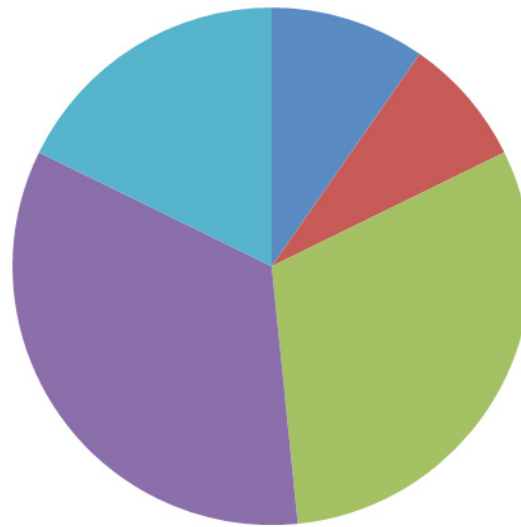
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Over the last few weeks, the North American Raspberry & Blackberry Association has been conducting an online survey of grower's berry prices, concentrating on prices for Pick-Your-Own and direct market retail sales. Thank you to all who participated! Below is some analysis of the responses, and on the next two pages is a chart of the responses organized by state and region, somewhat edited and standardized. Responses for black raspberries and red raspberries were combined, as there were not major differences.

Who took part in the survey? Along with current NARBA members, we invited past members and others on our email lists to participate. About 70 growers responded, of whom 65% were current members. Most respondents were experienced growers: 45% had been growing more than 10 years, 13% for 6-10 years, 21% for 3-5 years, and 9% for less than 3 years.

What were overall pricing strategies? As the pie chart below shows, most respondents did not plan to increase prices this year. The most important considerations in setting prices reported were about equally divided between what customers are willing/able to pay and what the grower needed to charge based on cost. When growers indicated second or third choices, these two were also the predominant choices.

What is the most important factor for you in setting your prices?



- I just stay about the same, but go up a bit every year or two.
- What berries sell for in the grocery store
- What I need to charge based on my costs
- What my customers are willing/able to pay, or used to paying
- What nearby competitors charge

What is customers' buying power? For the question asking growers to describe their customer base as upper income, middle income, lower income, or mixed. 48% said "middle income," and 37% said "mixed," with only 5% reporting "high income" and 10% "low income." (A few others just getting started couldn't yet say.) The sample size in the survey was not large enough to tease out pricing differences based on this factor.

What are growers charging? There are many factors involved in pricing, and this survey sample size is pretty small, so it is hard to use it to compare to your own prices. Growers who are at the low end of the scale, however, especially within their own region, may want to take a look at their prices to see if they are undercharging and undervaluing their berries!

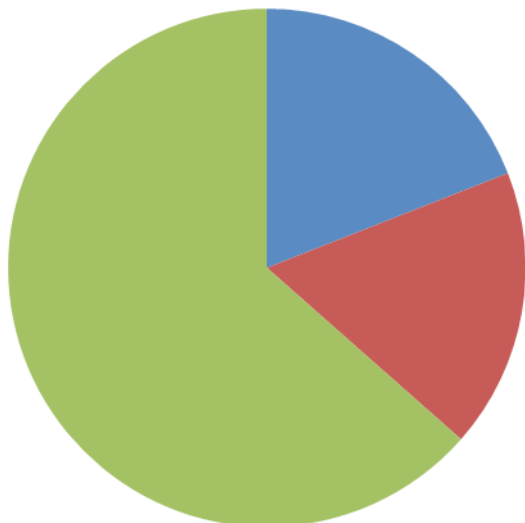
For PYO raspberries: The most commonly used unit was by the pound. The average price was \$4.02/lb, the highest price was \$6.00/lb, and the lowest was \$2.50/lb. For those who charged by the pint, the average price was \$4.07.

For pre-picked raspberries: The most common unit was the pint, with an average price of \$4.78/pint. The average price of those selling per pound was \$4.92/lb.

For PYO blackberries: The pound was the most common unit, with a high price of \$6.50/lb, a low price of \$2.00/lb and an average price of \$3.48/lb.

For pre-pick blackberries: Most people charge by the pound. The average price was \$4.80/lb, with a high of \$7.00 lb and a low of \$2.50/lb. For those who charged by the pint, the average price was \$5.44/pint, with a high of \$8.00 and a low of \$3.00. A number of growers also charge by the gallon, especially in southern states.

Do your prices this year represent an increase over last year's prices?



- Yes, we are increasing prices
- Not yet decided. I have reported 2014 prices.
- No, we are not increasing prices

Growers' Comments

There was no way to fit these comments into the chart on the next page, though they might have been even more insightful if still associated with the growers prices and location. They still make fascinating reading and a source of ideas and insights.

✿ There is a segment of our customer base that is quite affluent and usually aghast at how relatively low our prices are. However, they are often not local and when they come back, they bring friends and family from some distance.

✿ So far pricing has not been a problem until we have a glut. May do a sale or something to sell more a certain times.

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This chart summarizes responses received 5/25-6/8. Duplicate responses or those lacking prices have been removed. Format of units and prices has been standardized, and some additional info provided by some growers, e.g. on wholesale pricing or reduced prices for larger purchases, has been omitted. They are roughly grouped by region. There were some difficulties creating this table, so apologies if any errors have crept in. When black raspberry prices differ from red raspberries, or are the only raspberries reported, they are indicated as BR.

State	PYO Raspberries	Pre-picked Raspberries	PYO Blackberries	Pre-picked Blackberries
SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST				
AL			\$18/gal	\$25/gal or \$4.00/pt
AR	\$3.00/pt	\$4.00/pt	\$14/gal	\$18/gal
GA		\$4.50/1/2 pt		\$4.00/1/2 pt,
GA			\$10/gal	\$4.00/qt. \$15/gal
GA				Premium: \$22/gal, Culled: \$12/gal
MS			\$14/gal	\$16/gal
NC				\$4.00/pt, \$8.00/qt
NC	\$3.00/1/2 pt, \$2.50/lb	\$3.50/1/2 pt.	\$4.00/pt, \$5.00/lb	\$5.00/pt
NC		\$4.00/pt BR		\$4.00/pt
NC	\$3.00/lb	\$5.00/lb	\$2.00/lb	\$2.50/lb
OK			\$4.00/lb	\$5.00/lb
OK		\$10.00/lb	\$2.00/lb	\$4.00/lb
OK			\$3.00/lb	\$3.00/pt
SC			\$4.00/lb	\$6.40/lb
SC			\$2.50/lb	\$6.50/qt, \$24/gal
TN	\$5.00/lb	\$6.00/lb	\$4.00/lb	\$5.00/lb
TN		\$5.00/pt	\$20/gal	\$25/gal
TN				\$10/gal
TX			\$10/gal	
TX			\$2.75/lb	\$5.00/lb
MIDWEST				
IA	6.50/lb	7.00/pt	6.50/lb	7.00/pt
IL		\$5.00/pt, \$8.00/qt		
IL	\$5.00/pt			
IL		\$4.25/pt, \$5.25/pt BR		
IN			\$5.00/lb	\$6.00/lb
IN	\$8.00/lb BR	16.00/lb BR		
IN	\$3.00/lb	\$6.00/qt. \$3.50/pt		
KS			\$2.50/lb	\$3.99/lb
KY		BR: \$4.00/1/2 pt \$14.00/qt, \$45.00/gal		
MI	\$4.00/lb.	\$5.00/lb		
MI	\$1.75/pt	\$3.00/pt		
MI	\$3.00/pt, \$3.50/pt BR		\$3.00/pt	
MN	\$12/gal	\$3.50/pt	\$12/gal	\$3.50/pt
MN	\$3.95/pt	\$5.50/pt		
MO				\$4.50/lb
MO			\$2.75/lb	\$3.25/lb
MO	\$4.00/pt	\$5.00/pt	\$3.00/lb	\$4.50/lb
MO			\$4.00/lb	\$6.00/lb
OH	\$5.00 lb	\$6.00/lb	\$5.00/lb	\$6.00/lb
OH		\$5.00/1/2 pt (organic)		
OH	\$4.00/lb BR	\$5.00/lb		
OH	\$3.95/lb	\$9.50/qt		
OH	\$3.25/lb	\$3.50/pt	\$3.25/lb	\$5.00/pt
OH	\$2.95/pt or lb	\$4.75 - \$5.00/pt	\$2.95/lb	\$4.25 - \$5.00 (2013)

State	PYO Raspberries	Pre-picked Raspberries	PYO Blackberries	Pre-picked Blackberries
WI	\$4.00/½ pt, \$5.00/½ pt BR			
WI		\$4.00/pt		
WI	\$4.00/pt	\$5.00/pt		
MID-ATLANTIC				
MD		BR: \$4/pt wholesale		2.75/½ pt, \$3.75/pt wholesale
MD	\$4.79/lb	\$5.09/pt, \$6.09/pt BR	\$2.79/lb	\$4.10/pt
PA	\$4.99/lb, \$4.50/lb >10 lbs	\$3.99/½ pt, \$5.99 pt	\$3.99/lb	\$4.99/pt
PA		\$5.00/½ pt \$5.00 -\$6.00/½ pt BR		\$4.00/½-pt \$6.00/pt when plentiful
VA		\$5.00/6-oz clamshell \$10.00/16-oz clamshell \$6.00/6-oz clamshell BR		\$4.00/6-ounce clamshell \$7.00/16-ounce clamshell
VA		\$5.50/½-pt		\$5.50/½-pt early, \$6.00/pt peak season
NORTHEASTERN STATES AND CANADA				
CT	\$4.50/lb	\$3.75/½-pt		
ME	\$4.00/pt	\$5.00/pt		
ME	\$3.25/pt	\$4.50/pt		
ON	\$3.00/lb		\$3.00/lb	
ON		\$3.75/pt		
WEST				
CO	\$6.00/lb, \$6.50/lb BR (org.)			
NV		\$8.00/pt, \$9.00/pt BR		\$8.00/pt
OR		\$3.00/1/2 pt. \$30/flat		
UT	\$3.00/lb	\$30.00/6-lb flat	\$3.00/lb	

✿ Black raspberries are such a rarity in this area. Once the restaurant owners sample a free half-pint of berries they often buy all I have. Could probably demand more, and may do so next year.

✿ This is a hobby for me. I recall a grower at the NARBA meeting in February stating you can't make money growing these. I come close to breaking even and have lots of fun with my berries.

✿ Since I am the only organic grown farmer in the area, I can charge and get higher prices than the few competitors. I try to have double the price that my competitors list and I always sell out.

✿ We have so many we are trying a bulk rate to get rid of more berries. This is our first year trying this. I check grocery store prices for a close number to charge.

✿ We also sell blueberries, and usually run out of market before product on all. Very little local competition for the blueberries or raspberries, but much on the blackberries. On good years, we can run out of market on them, then must adjust price down and/or take some to auction.

✿ Cost of maintaining, replacing and/or adding variety has gone up therefore the

price increase. We also monitor what our customers are willing and able to pay.

✿ I price at whatever I would pay, and check what other markets charge. The economy has been hard for people in our area.

✿ Our crops look very good for this year and since our most important factor on setting price is covering costs, we do not feel a need to increase.

✿ Since we have been one of the higher priced operations in our area and our second highest factor is what customers are willing to pay, we felt it wise to not increase this year.

✿ I explain with regards to price increase labor is up, inputs are up, and invasive species increase pest management costs and grading labor.

✿ We are going back to the CSA model next year so this year we are improving our fields and adding a lot of plants. The pricing we're doing is just to get product off the plants while they develop.

✿ We try to retain consistent pricing so customers know what to expect.

✿ Since I don't know what my true production costs are, I simply attempt to maximize product quality and charge high

prices. I sell small packages to people who see selectivity in that. Customer allegiance and high praise for my berries tells me I'm doing something right.

✿ We have a limited amount of berries and have all the customers that we need and sell all we grow. We provide extra services and have very nice quality berries. Price has not been a factor. The grocery stores in the area have specials that are cheap but our customers like our berries due to their quality and the opportunity to come out to the farm and pick with their children.

✿ Most of our berries are sold wholesale, so if we remove inventory from our wholesale for a retail customer, we expect to receive a better price. We anticipate about \$4.00- 4.50/lb for our wholesale berries.

✿ Prices for all berries increase by \$1.00/lb for farmer markets or other off-farm sales.

✿ I try to be the highest-price product because I think I have the highest quality product.

✿ We are the only organic raspberry U-pick in our area, but even so we find that it makes business sense to price competitively with local conventional

growers. We don't yet have commercial pack/processing options for excess crop, so we make up for that with a consistently high local U-pick base. We also supply berries to small organic CSAs at a discount, but we have not yet gotten a very good handle on what that price point should be.

✿ We do a PYO club membership – cost is \$5 per customer. This covers all PYO crops and entitles them to 10% off. We find this very effective in bringing people back often.

✿ We provide buckets and ties for the pickers, a playground, sandbox, and general childcare. We also have a picnic area and flowers for the ladies when they leave.

Our prices are higher than our competitors because of our berry quality and the customer service we provide.

✿ We package pre-picked [blackberries] in 1 and 2 lb clamshells with our label on them.

✿ Pricing by the pound is absolutely necessary. We find that a pound is an indisputable quantity whereas a quart or other means of measurement is somewhat subjective.

✿ Our customer base is almost exclusively high-end restaurants in Bowling Green, KY and Nashville, TN These restaurants really pursue the “farm-to-table” concept and actually post our farm name as their source.

✿ I deliver large quantities of berries to farm marketers located near Washington, DC. I have the cost of hauling, but they take care of retail sales.

✿ My berries are grown using organic methods. Most of my customers seem pleased with the price and some leave a tip as my farm stand is self-serve.

✿ I price U-pick at 1/2 Walmart price and retail at 80% of Walmart.

✿ Early and late season we pick blackberries in half pints and sell at the same prices as red raspberries. But in peak summer-time harvest we pick in 1 pint containers and sell at the same price.

✿ We try our darnedest not to prepick :).



What does NARBA do?

- Holds educational conferences and meetings: Next annual conference: Williamsburg, VA, March 2-4, 2016.
- Funds raspberry and blackberry research through its North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation
- Speaks out for the raspberry and blackberry industry
- Educates the public and the media
- Provides resources & info to growers

Benefits of membership include:

- *The Bramble*, NARBA's quarterly newsletter.
- Proceedings of the annual conference and an annual membership directory.
- Discount conference registration, books, and resources, such as our recipe brochures,
- Links to your website on the NARBA website.
- Support and information from the NARBA network of growers and researchers.
- Special online “Members Only” resources, including an E-Forum for sharing ideas, queries, and comments.

Like this kind of information? Want to be part of our community of growers? Join or renew the North American Raspberry & Blackberry Association today!

Name(s) _____

Farm/Company/Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone #1 _____ (home work farm cell)

Phone #2 _____) _____ (home work farm cell)

E-mail _____

Website _____

I prefer to receive newsletters by mail by email (pdf file)

Acreage in raspberries/blackberries if currently in production: _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES *1/4 of grower dues goes directly to the North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation. Memberships are per family/farm for growers, per person for Research/Extension/Students, and per company address Uup to 3 names and emails) for Industry memberships. All fees in US funds only, please.*

Grower Membership: New members: \$50 Renewing members: \$85 \$ _____

plus Acreage Charge (all growers): \$5 per acre in raspberries/blackberries, maximum acreage charge \$100 \$ _____

Additional donation to the North American Bramble Growers Research Foundation (tax deductible) \$ _____

PAYMENT by Check MasterCard Visa Discover

Credit card # _____

Exp. Date _____

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