



2008 Raspberry/Blackberry Pricing Survey

By Debby Wechsler, NARBA Executive Secretary

In mid-September, I sent out an email query to members inviting them tell us their berry prices in 2008 for an article in *The Bramble*. We received a real outpouring of response, with 34 members responding – that's about 25-30 percent of our grower members who have email. Thank you to all who replied! Many included additional and interesting information with their prices. Most prices quoted were for local retail and PYO; only a few growers gave wholesale prices.

There is, as you might expect, wide variation in how growers price their berries. Factors such as variation in yields and productivity in different regions, cost of production and harvest labor, local consumer demand and price expectations, and competition from other sellers all influence price. However, growers with exceptionally low prices may want to re-examine their pricing to see if they are indeed meeting production costs, if they are undercutting other growers, and if they are simply undervaluing their fresh and delicious berries!

A few points of informal statistical analysis:

Pick Your Own: Pricing for PYO raspberries was split about equally between pricing by weight (by pound) and by unit (pint). The average price was \$3.75/lb and \$3.15/pint. The highest prices were \$4.79/lb and \$4.00/pint and the lowest were \$2.70/lb and 2.00/pint.

PYO blackberries were almost always sold by weight, with an average price of \$2.51/lb. The highest price was \$3.35/lb and the lowest was \$1.75.

Retail: For raspberries sold direct to the public (generally at on-farm stands or farmers' markets), we received 13 quotes of half-pint prices, 9 of pint prices, and 1 of quart prices. (There may be unstated unit variations also: half-pint basket and

various similar clamshells may contain different amounts.) The average retail price for raspberries was \$4.75/pint and \$3.65/half-pint. Pint prices ranged from \$3.25 to \$6.99 and half-pint prices ranged from \$2.25 to \$5.25. Very few were at the high end of this range, but rather more were at the low end.

Retail blackberries were generally sold by the pint (11 prices) or the quart (6 prices). Average prices were \$4.06/pint and \$6.50/quart. There is a good bit of variability here – the highest prices were as much as 40-45% higher than the lowest prices. This likely reflects the fact that in some areas blackberries are hard-to-produce delicacies while in others they are much easier to grow or consumers think of them as wild fruit and won't pay much.

Wholesale: Prices for a flat of 12 half-pints of raspberries ranged from \$18 to \$36, with an average price of \$27.50. A few growers quoted prices for wholesale blackberries (a flat of 12 pints), with most charging \$30/flat. There is a big difference between wholesaling to a local farm stand, to a restaurant, or to a chain store or major shipper; most of these are for local wholesale.

Another interesting fact from these responses is how many growers quoted prices in uneven amounts: for example \$3.79/half-pint or \$3.99/lb. I see this indicative of several things: growers must have some good scales and cash registers to work out their totals, and either there really is a psychological advantage to saying \$3.99 instead of \$4.00 or everyone thinks there is.

Below are the responses grouped by region and by state. The responses have been edited for brevity and to make terminology, punctuation and the order of information more consistent, and farm names and locations have been removed.

New England/Eastern Canada New York

◆ Raspberries for \$4.00/pint PYO. Retail,

\$4.00/half-pint or 2 for \$7.00 at the farm stand. We are trying to encourage people who come to the farm to pick their own. At farmers markets, \$4.00/half-pint or 2 for \$7.00 at beginning and end of season and \$3.00/half-pint or 2 for \$5.00 at the height of season.. Early greenhouse berries are \$5.00/half-pint. Wholesale: \$25.00/flat of half-pints delivered, but I think that I need to charge a delivery fee or increase the price.

◆ I have a variety trial of black raspberries that I harvest for yield, and we market the berries through a local retailer. The price this year was \$2.00 per half-pint pulp container for fresh. The culls were frozen and sold to a local fruit winery for \$3.50/lb.

◆ At the Cornell Orchard store, blackberries and raspberries sell for \$5.00/pint. We sell a few fall raspberries PYO for \$2.00/half-pint.

Massachusetts:

◆ All PYO: \$4.79 per pound, equivalent to \$3.25- \$3.50 per pint (Other local growers charged \$2.50-\$3.00 per pint.) Wholesale: blackberries, red and golden raspberries are \$30 per 12 half-pint flat. (Other local growers charged \$24-\$27 per flat.) Juice/Jam raspberries: 10-pound flats (12 pints) and 5-gallon pails (40 pounds) \$2.25-\$2.50 per pound. Retail: \$40/flat of 12 half-pints and \$3.79/half-pint basket. (Other local growers \$2.99-\$3.50 half-pint.) Retailers who buy wholesale from us sell our berries for \$3.50-\$4.29/half-pint.

Connecticut

◆ Raspberries \$3/pint PYO and retail \$3/half-pint at the farm. Blackberries \$5/pint retail.

Maine

◆ PYO Raspberries \$2.75/pint, prepicked raspberries \$4.50 pint, flat of 12 pints \$42.00. Wholesale, \$30.00 a flat of 12 half-pints. We sold about 16,000 lbs of raspberries this year with about 2/3 sold PYO and the rest wholesale.

◆ **Quebec City:** We have a lot of conflicts here between the prices of the people who make their living only from agriculture compared to the others who only farm for a second income. The price I sold my products is the same all season long. For PYO it is \$2.95/lb for summer raspberries and \$3.50/lb for fall raspberries. For other growers, the price is around \$2.10/lb.

Mid-Atlantic States

Pennsylvania

◆ Red/black raspberries: PYO \$3.99/lb. (discount @ 5 lbs. to \$3.75). At farm market: \$4.99/pint (3 for \$14) and \$3.59/half-pint. Wholesale, 12 pints for \$40 and 12 half-pints for \$28. Blackberries: PYO \$3.35/lb. (discount @ 5 lb. to \$2.99). At farm market, \$4.59 pint (\$3.99 special) and \$2.79/half-pint. Wholesale, 12 pints for \$30.

◆ We sell Certified organic black raspberries for \$3.50/half-pint at farmers markets, \$6.00/lb. for frozen berries in 3-lb. containers. In previous years, we have sold red raspberries at \$4.00/half-pint at the market. \$4.50 for an 11-ounce jar of jam

Maryland

◆ Raspberries are \$3.75/lb. PYO.

◆ Fall red raspberries are PYO \$3.99/lb.; retail in our farm market, \$6.99/pint, \$4.59/half-pint. Blackberries: PYO \$2.29/lb.; retail at our market: \$6.50/quart or \$3.99/pint.

West Virginia

◆ I retail my red and yellow fall raspberries for \$3.00/half-pint, two half-pints for \$5.00, \$24.00 per flat of 12 half-pints. I keep these prices at all my markets/locations. I also wholesale to other farm markets and to retailers in Washington DC for \$18.00 per flat of 12 half-pints. That comes out to \$1.50 per half pint, and most of the people I wholesale to retail the berries at the same price I retail them for.

Virginia

◆ We are 100% PYO and we use a volume system. For blackberries we use quarts and 4-quart dry measure berry containers. For raspberries, we provide customers only with pint berry tils. Our price for both blackberries and raspberries is \$2.50/pint. We give a \$2 discount

for 8 pints of blackberries, making it \$18; for anything less than 8 pints total, price is still \$2.50 per pint. We do not give a volume discount for our primocane, late summer raspberries.

◆ Red raspberries: PYO \$4.15/lb. Retail in the farm store \$4.15/lb; \$4.20/half-pint; flat of 12 half-pints at \$43.45. At farmer's markets: \$5.25/half-pint; or 2 for \$10.00; flat for \$50.00. Wholesale: flat of 12 half-pints for \$27.00 if picked up, \$28.00 if we deliver. Blackberries: PYO \$2.20/lb. Retail in the farm store, \$2.20/lb.; \$2.10/half-pint; \$4.05/pint; \$7.20/quart; flat of 12 pints for \$37.45. Wholesale \$30.00 for flat of 12 pints. At farmer's markets \$5.25/pint or 2 pints for \$10.00; flat of 12 pints \$50.00.

◆ My berries are Certified Naturally Grown. I sell both wholesale and retail. My wholesale accounts are three white tablecloth restaurants, a health food store, and an on-farm produce stand owned by a friend. My "retail" sales consist of a Tuesday pm farm market in a small nearby town and a local Saturday farm market on an as-needed basis. Early and late raspberries: Retail \$4/6-oz. box. Wholesale for \$36/flat of half-pint clamshells (6 oz. box); Blackberries: retail \$3/6-oz. box, wholesale \$30/flat (early) and \$27/flat (late) of half-pint clamshells (6 oz. box). I emphasize berry quality, freshness (field to customer within 12 hours), local, and organic. The local area is very wealthy, with an extraordinary median household income of \$107,000, the highest in the U.S.

The South

Alabama

◆ Blackberries were \$18 a gallon [8 dry pints], roughly \$3/lb., PYO and \$4/pint prepicked at our fruit stand. We also sold wholesale to a local farmers market vendor in Montgomery for \$2.50 a pint.

South Carolina

◆ Blackberries: PYO \$1.75/lb. We-pick is \$18/gallon or \$4.50 per quart on-farm and \$20/gallon or \$5.00/quart at farmers markets. We do not sell pints. When picking gets difficult we increase the price to \$24/gallon at all locations.

North Carolina

◆ Red raspberries direct to the consumer at our local farmers market: \$2.50/half-

pint plastic clamshell.

Kentucky

◆ We sold our blackberries (Apache and Ouachita) for \$4.00/pint. (After reading the last *Bramble* newsletter [September 2008], we feel we need to make it known that our customers who bought our Apache said they were the best blackberries they have tasted. Strangely enough, during the last two weeks we picked the Apaches there were no white drupelets on the berries, but 75% of them were just as large as the first ones we picked.) We are selling our fall raspberries (Fall Gold and Caroline) for \$4.00/half-pint. We sold all our blackberries at that price and we are selling all we can pick of the raspberries at that price.

Midwest

Ohio

◆ For all colors of berries – black, purple, fall gold, fall red: \$3.15/lb for PYO. For prepicked berries: \$9/quart, \$5/pint.

◆ Raspberries (red or black): \$4.00/lb. for PYO. Retail, \$10.00 per hand-picked quart, fresh or frozen. I estimate with my hourly wages that it costs me \$1.80/lb. and a quart is 1.5 lbs. The container (clamshell) is \$0.45 each and 6 qt. master is \$1.60. Costs continue to rise and I'll consider increasing price by 10% in 2009. I calculate that my costs are 26% higher in 2008 than 2006. Blackberries: \$2.75/lb. for PYO. Retail, \$9.00 per hand-picked quart, fresh or frozen. All frozen black raspberries are sold out [in fall] and only 2 dozen quarts of red raspberries and 2 dozen quarts of blackberries remain for sale during our Christmas tree sales in November and December.

◆ Black and red raspberries: PYO \$3.25/lb. Prepicked for outdoor markets, \$3.25/half-pint. Blackberries: PYO \$3.25/lb. Prepicked for outdoor markets. \$5.00/pint.

◆ Fall raspberries: PYO \$2.70/lb. Retail \$3.75/pint. Wholesale; \$36/flat of 12 pints.

◆ Blackberries: PYO \$2.00/lb., retail for \$3.00/pint. Wholesale: \$30/flat of 12 pints.

Indiana

◆ Blackberries at our farmers market in Central Indiana went for \$8.00/quart.

◆ Blackberries: PYO for \$2.75/lb.
 ◆ Red and black raspberries: prepicked \$6.00/pint. Blackberries: prepicked \$6.00/quart. There is a limited supply, thus a bit of a “premium” price. They were also sold in an established spot, where ready-picked blueberries are sold. We will eventually have enough to have a PYO area as well, but that is a few years away.

Illinois

◆ Red raspberries: \$4.25/pint and \$2.25/half-pint. Black raspberries: \$4.50/pint and \$2.50/half-pint. These are all retail, we do not offer PYO. We sell our berries by way of a small market here at the farm and at two farmers’ markets. We have not experienced any difficulty selling out of berries. However, we do see a dramatic drop in sales at the on-farm market when school starts each late summer. This doesn’t seem to hold true for the farmers’ markets. In fact, the sales at the farmers’ markets seem to increase in the late summer/fall.

Missouri

◆ Summer raspberries PYO start at \$2.00/half-pint with gradual quantity discounts for larger purchases (e.g., \$1.95/each at 3 half-pints, \$1/85/each at 9 half-pints).

Michigan

◆ Blackberries: wholesale for \$30/flat of 12 pints to rural vegetable and fruit market stands within eight miles of my

berry farm.

Minnesota

◆ Fall raspberries (red, yellow, and pink): PYO for \$3.50/level pint. Pre-pick for \$5.50/pint. Our local farmers market are at \$5-\$6 per pint and grocery stores are \$3.99 for 6 oz.

The West

Idaho

◆ Raspberries: \$28.89 for a flat of 12 half-pints slightly heaped. Blackberries: \$29.29 for a flat of 12 pints, level full. All retail on-farm.

Montana

◆ PYO blackberries \$2.00/pint, and prepick \$3.00/pint. We have heard that blackberries are going for \$5.00/pint at the farmers market, but it is not something that we can take advantage of.

Oregon

◆ All certified organic, all fruit sold in Portland, pints only. Raspberries, loganberries, boysenberries, blackcaps, purple raspberries: At the farmers’ market: raspberries for \$3.50/pint, \$18/6 pints and blackberries for \$3.00/pint, \$15/6 pints. About 65% of farmers’ market sales are as half-flats. To restaurants: raspberries, loganberries, boysenberries, blackcaps, purple raspberries: \$30/flat of 12 pints, and blackberries \$28/flat of 12 pints. To stores: blackberries \$24/flat of 12 pints (labeled with farm name). For process-

More on Prices

For production and farm prices for processed and fresh fruit in **Oregon** visit www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Oregon/Publications/Fruits_Nuts_and_Berries/01_28br.pdf

For production and farm prices for processed and fresh fruit in **Washington**: www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Washington/Publications/Berries/berry08.pdf

To see current **wholesale price reports** for berries from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/fvdfob.pdf>.

The California Strawberry Commission publishes the National Berry Report of daily wholesale prices (at major shipping points) at <http://www.calstrawberry.com/market/nationalberryreport.asp>.

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Price Makes a Difference...

...and so do yields, production costs, and harvest and marketing costs, in determining your bottom line. Shown to right is one of the tables from the newly revised **Commercial Blackberry 10-acre Budget**, produced by North Carolina State University. The table shows different prices and yield rates and the estimated returns, based on production and marketing costs calculated elsewhere in the budget. The figures in parentheses show price/yield combinations that result in a net loss.

The 18-page budget by Charles Safley, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and Gina Fernandez, Dept. of Horticultural Science, NCSU, covers costs from land preparation

ESTIMATED RETURNS FOR COMMERCIAL BLACKBERRY PRODUCTION FOR VARYING YIELDS AND PRICES PER FLAT

Wholesale Market (\$/flat)	Marketable Flats per Acre ¹				
	1,237	1,547	1,933	2,320	2,784
\$10.24	(\$5,055)	(\$3,799)	(\$2,229)	(\$659)	\$1,225
\$12.80	(\$1,887)	\$160	\$2,720	\$5,280	\$8,352
\$16.00	\$2,072	\$5,110	\$8,907	\$12,704	\$17,260
\$19.20	\$6,032	\$10,059	\$15,094	\$20,128	\$26,169
\$23.04	\$10,783	\$15,998	\$22,518	\$29,037	\$36,860

¹It was assumed that 80.0% of the total yield was marketable fruit.

through the third year of production.

An Excel spreadsheet version of the new budget is available online at: www.smallfruits.org/Bramble/production/CommercialBKBudget2008Final.xls
 A PDF file of the budget is posted on

NARBA’s own website at:

www.raspberryblackberry.com/Webdocs/CommercialBKBudget2008Final.pdf.
 If you don’t want to type all that in, just click on “Growers” on the left-side menu on the homepage.✿