



2019 INDIANA FARMERS MARKET PRICES

Vegetable Prices for the 2019 Market Season

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Farmers markets have become an increasingly important component of the US local food systems. The number of farmers markets has increased exponentially in the last decade – from almost 6,000 in 2010 to about 9,000 in 2019, an increase of almost 50% (USDA-AMS, 2019).

On the supply side, small farmers usually use farmers markets as a main market channel, while these outlets have become a complementary market for medium and larger farmers wanting to improve their cash flow (Feenstra et al., 2003). Torres and Marshall (2016) reported that in Indiana, over two-thirds of fruit and vegetable growers use farmers markets as a major outlet for their products. They reported that farmers markets allow farmers to sell their products directly to consumers, while establishing long-term relationships with them. On the demand side, the popularity of farmers markets is due to the increasing consumer demand for local and fresh products (Khouryieh et al., 2019).

This publication provides the weekly prices of the 20 most sold vegetables at Indiana farmers markets during the 2019 market

season. This publication is the first of a series of three articles illustrating the prices of vegetables, fruits, and other specialty crops sold at farmers market in Indiana. Each publication provides the lowest and highest prices of specialty crops sold at Indiana farmers markets, which illustrates the price variation in 2019. The reports can help farmers compare prices of products over time, evaluate the market window for different crops, choose the appropriate crop mix that can help maximize farm profitability, and understand market competition by looking at different price ranges.

The Purdue Farmers Market Project

Data for this publication comes from a project led by researchers at the Purdue Horticulture Business Extension Program. Since 2017, researchers have collected and published weekly prices of specialty crops sold at Indiana farmers markets. The goal of the project is to collect foundational data to support real-time decision-making by specialty crop farmers.

Through collaborations with farmers market managers, extension personnel, and market volunteers, 2019 prices were collected weekly at 6 Indiana farmers markets located in 4 Indiana counties. Farmers markets participating in the project were: Bloomington Community Center Farmers' Market and Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market (Monroe County), Lafayette and West Lafayette (Tippecanoe County), Plymouth (Marshall County), and Growing Places Indy Winter Market (Marion County). Highest and lowest prices collected for each crop highlight how prices vary weekly. Units of products included pound, bag, box, and bunch. Prices are published weekly at the Horticulture Business Program website, www.hort.purdue.edu/HortBusiness.

Vegetable Prices

Figures 1 through 20 illustrate the price variation of the 20 most-sold vegetables at Indiana farmers markets. Vegetables are listed in alphabetical order.

Figure 1 illustrates the price variation of arugula (by bag). Arugula prices were reported from January (\$3.50/bag) through October (\$3.00 to \$4.00/bag), with little variation between highest and lowest prices. Prices of arugula varied during late summer, when prices fluctuated between \$3.00 and \$4.00 per bag. The highest price of arugula was reported in mid-May at \$4.75/bag; the lowest price reached \$3.00/bag in February, August, and September.

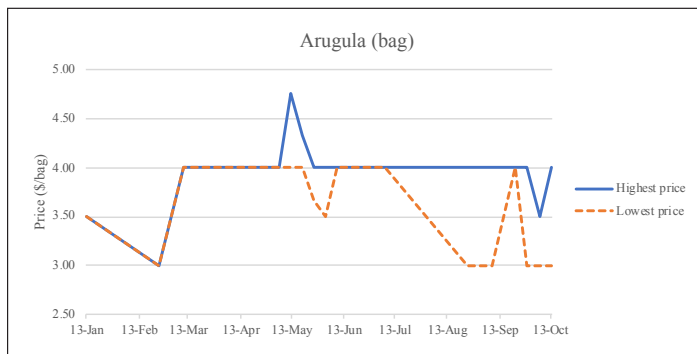


Figure 1. Highest and lowest prices of arugula (\$/bag) sold at Indiana farmers market in 2019.

Figure 2 displays the weekly prices of beets (by bunch). Beets were available from January at \$3.00/bunch to November (\$4.00/bunch). In early July, prices fell to \$0.50/bunch (lowest) and \$2.00/bunch (highest), then rose again at the beginning of August to \$4.00/bunch. The highest price of beets was \$4.50/bunch (early June), while the lowest price was \$0.50/bunch (end of July).

Prices of bell peppers are displayed in Figure 3. Bell peppers were available from late May (\$0.75/each) to early December (\$1.00/each). As illustrated in Figure 3, bell pepper prices had significant variation in 2019,

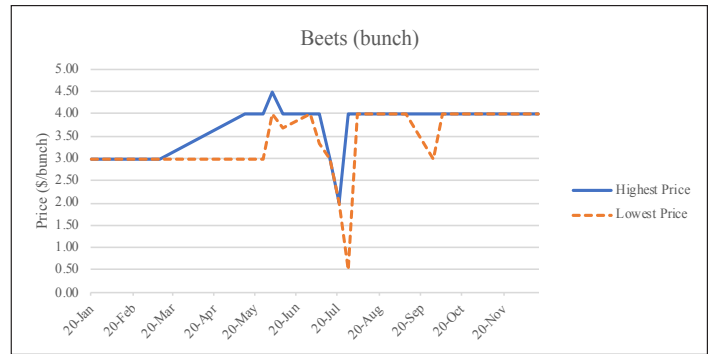


Figure 2. Highest and lowest prices of beets (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

increasing and decreasing multiple times throughout the year. The lowest price paid for each bell pepper was \$0.50 (during the main harvest season of August through September); the highest reported price was in mid-July, at \$1.75/each.

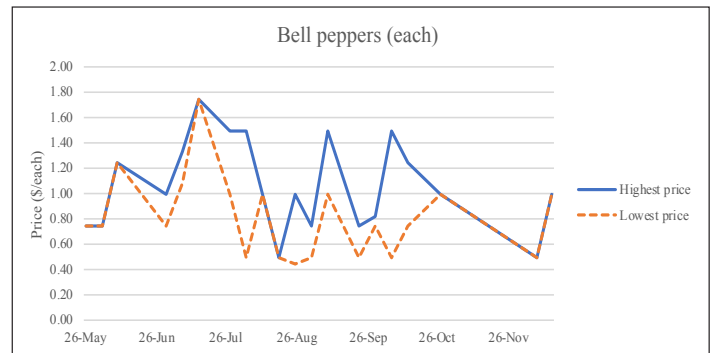


Figure 3. Highest and lowest prices of bell peppers (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 4 illustrates the weekly prices of cabbage sold by head. Data showed no considerable variation between lowest and highest prices paid for a head of cabbage in 2019. Cabbage was sold at farmers markets from February at \$4.00/head until December at \$3.00/head. The price for each cabbage remained between \$4.00 and \$3.00 for most of the year, but it decreased in September to \$1.00/head.

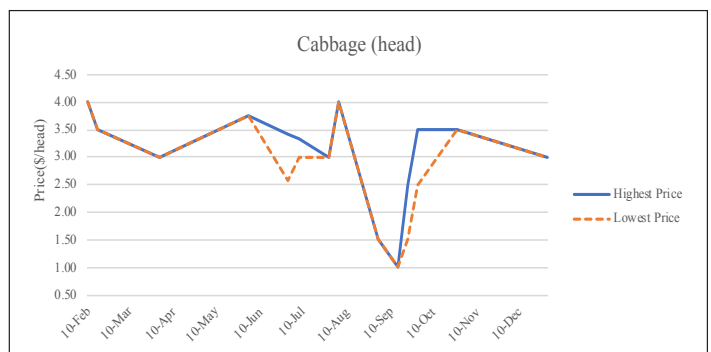


Figure 4. Highest and lowest prices of cabbage (\$/head) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 5 shows carrots were sold at Indiana farmers markets from January (\$4.50/bunch) until December (\$4.50/bunch). At farmers markets, carrot prices are among the least stable, and prices indeed varied significantly throughout the year. This variation may be due to different weights, varieties, and sizes of carrots. The highest price paid for a bunch of carrots was \$4.50 (reached at multiple times of the year), and the lowest price was \$2.00 (early August).

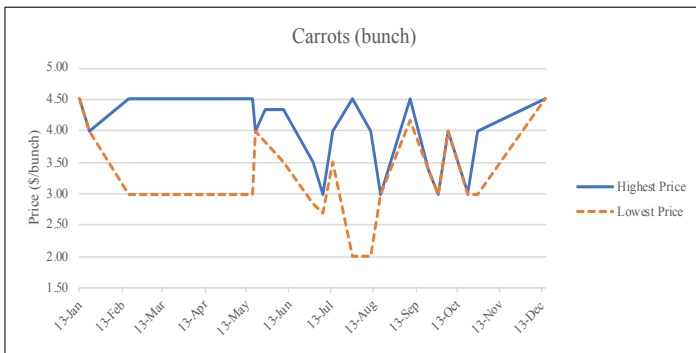


Figure 5. Highest and lowest prices of carrots (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Collard greens per bunch (Figure 6) were sold from January (\$3.00/bunch) until December (\$3.00/bunch). Interestingly, the price of collard greens fluctuated only from January until May, which may be due to a higher demand for leafy greens during winter and spring and lowest supply. (Collards are a warm season crop.) Prices remained stable at \$3.00 per bunch for the second half of the year. In mid-April, collard greens reached their highest price at \$4.00/bunch; the lowest price was reported in mid-May at \$1.50/bunch.

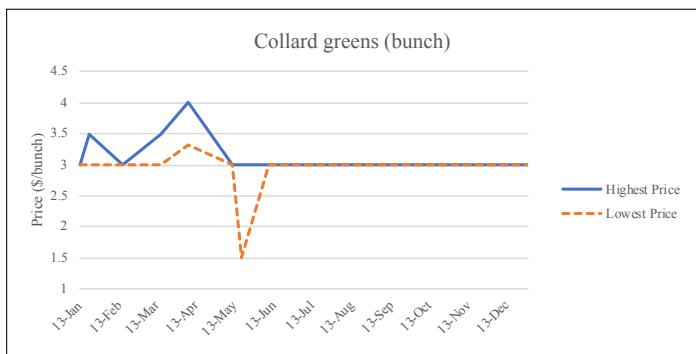


Figure 6. Highest and lowest prices of collard greens (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 7 shows that slicing cucumber (each) was sold at the markets from late April (\$2.00/each) until July (\$0.75 to \$1.33/each). Highest and lowest prices of cucumber were similar from April to May. The highest price of cucumber was reached in early July at \$2.00; the lowest price was reached in September at \$0.75/each.

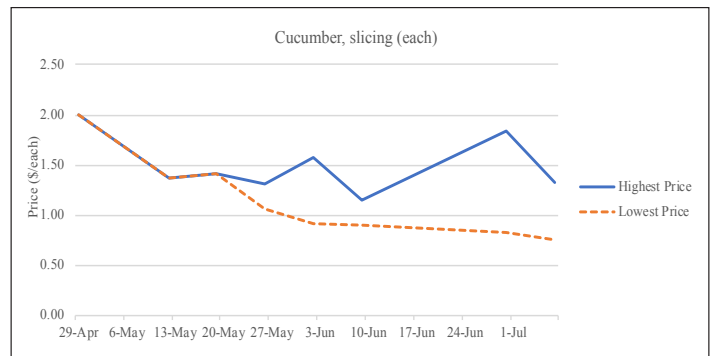


Figure 7. Highest and lowest prices of slicing cucumber (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Price and availability of pickling cucumbers are displayed in Figure 8. Pickling cucumbers were available from late May (\$1.50/each) to late October (\$1.00 to \$2.00/each). However, their prices ranged from \$2.00/each, reached in July, and \$0.50/each, reached in June, September and October.

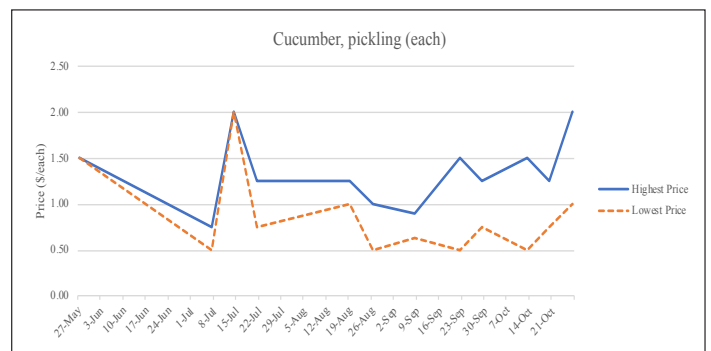


Figure 8. Highest and lowest prices of pickling cucumber (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 9 displays the prices of each head of garlic sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019. Garlic was available from late June (\$2.00/each) until December (\$0.50 to \$1.00/each). The highest price of garlic reached \$2.00/head in July, August, September, and October. The lowest price of garlic occurred in July and December at \$0.50/each. As seen in Figure 9, prices of garlic had significant variation, especially at the beginning and end of 2019.

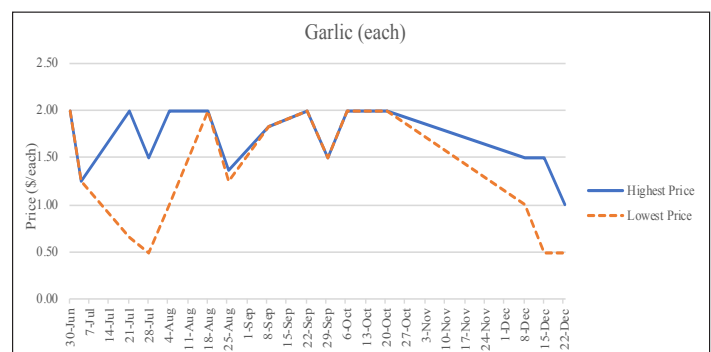


Figure 9. Highest and lowest prices of head of garlic (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

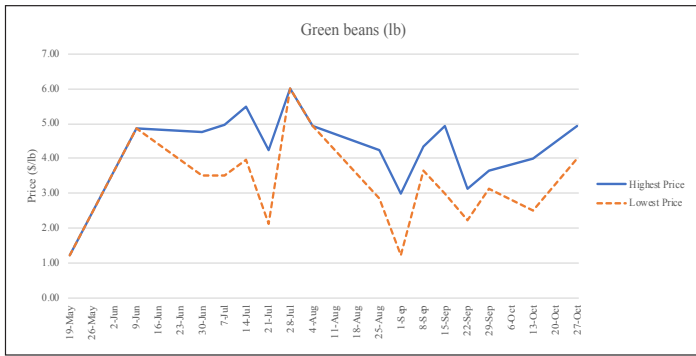


Figure 10. Highest and lowest prices of green beans (\$/lb.) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

In 2019, green beans (Figure 10) were sold at Indiana farmers markets from late May (\$1.25/lb.) to late October (\$4.00 to \$4.95/lb.). The price of green beans per pound ranged from \$6.00 (late July) to \$1.00 per pound (mid-August and early September).

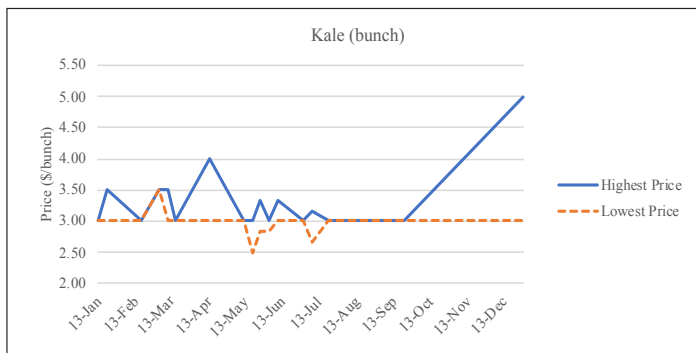


Figure 11. Highest and lowest prices of kale (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 11 illustrates the prices of kale per bunch from January (\$3.00/bunch) until September (\$3.00/bunch). Prices stayed moderately stable throughout the year, with an average price of \$3.00 per bunch. The highest price of kale occurred in mid-April at \$4.00 per bunch, while the lowest price per bunch was \$2.50 in May.

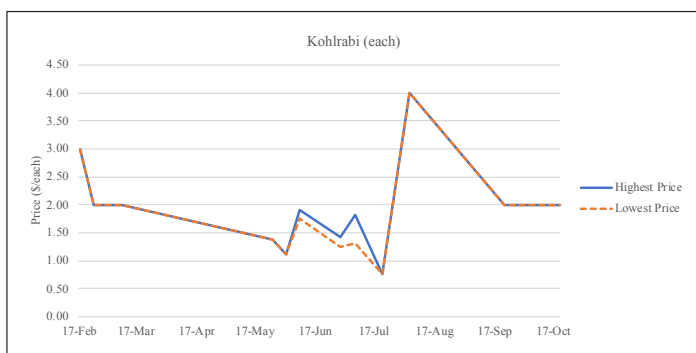


Figure 12. Highest and lowest prices of kohlrabi (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 12 displays the price variation of kohlrabi (each) sold from February (\$3.00/each) until October (\$2.00/each). Highest and lowest prices overlapped during most of 2019. It is likely that a low number of farmers selling kohlrabi at the market decreased its price variation. During the month of July, kohlrabi experienced both the highest price (\$4.00/each) and lowest price (\$0.75/each).

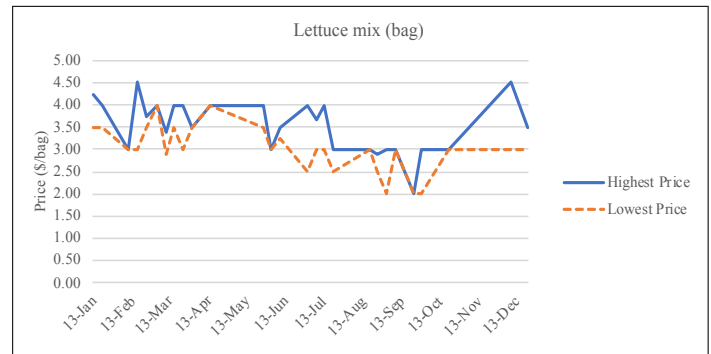


Figure 13. Highest and lowest prices of lettuce mix (\$/bag) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 13 illustrates the price and availability of lettuce mixes (by bag) at Indiana farmers markets. Bags of lettuce were available all year long and showed price variation over time. The highest price for a bag of lettuce mix was \$4.50 in February and December; the lowest price was \$2.00 in September.

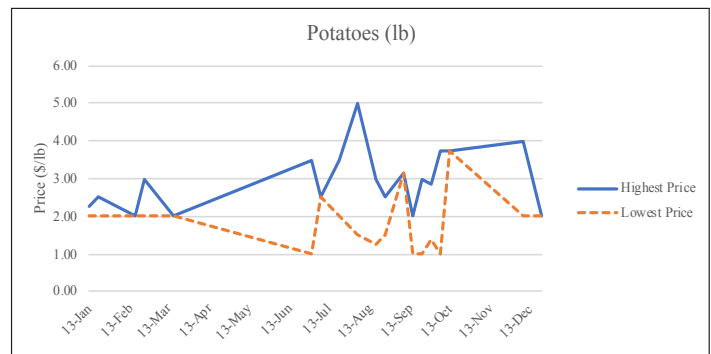


Figure 14. Highest and lowest prices of potatoes (\$/lb.) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Potatoes (by pound) were sold year-round at Indiana farmers markets (Figure 14). Highest and lowest prices diverged at different points (e.g., March, July, and October). The highest and lowest price of potatoes were \$5.00 and \$1.00 per pound, respectively.

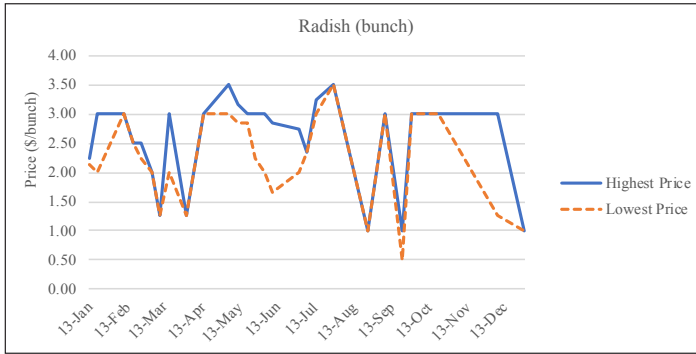


Figure 15. Highest and lowest prices of radish (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 15 illustrates weekly prices of radish (per bunch) in 2019. While lowest and highest prices followed closely, the weekly variation of prices may indicate product differentiation, bunch size, and differences in supply and demand at the markets. The price of a bunch of radishes ranged from \$3.50 (in May and August) to \$0.50 (in early October).

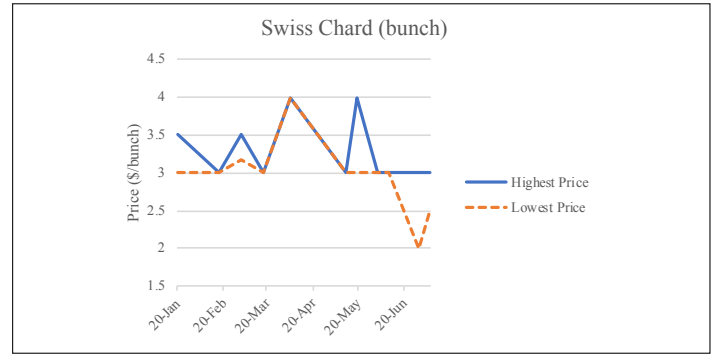


Figure 17. Highest and lowest prices paid of swiss chard (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 17 shows the price variation of swiss chard (per bunch) sold from January (between \$3.00 and \$3.50 per bag) to early July (between \$2.50 and \$3.00 per bag). Lowest and highest prices of swiss chard overlapped from March to May. Swiss chard reached its highest price of \$4.00 per bunch in April and May; the lowest price occurred in July at \$2.00 per bunch.

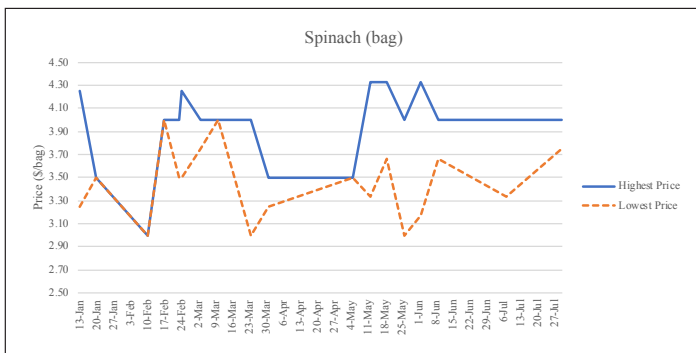


Figure 16. Highest and lowest prices of spinach (\$/bag) paid at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 16 illustrates the price and availability of spinach (by bag) sold at Indiana farmers markets. Spinach was sold from January (between \$3.25 and \$4.25 per bag) until the end of July (between \$4.00 and \$3.75 per bag). Lowest and highest prices of spinach varied greatly, especially from February until July. The highest price of spinach was \$4.30 per bag, and the lowest was \$3.00 per bag.

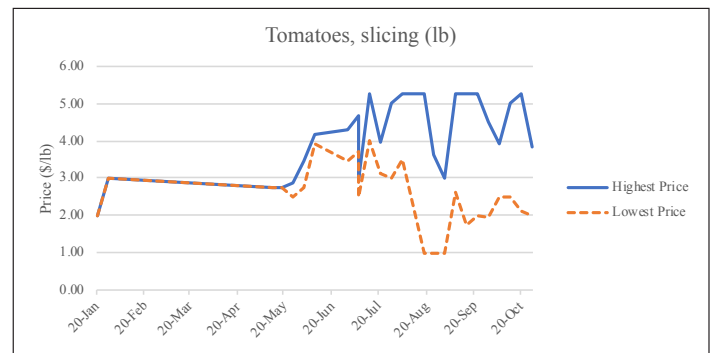


Figure 18. Highest and lowest prices of slicing tomatoes (\$/lb.) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 18 illustrates the prices and availability of slicing tomatoes (per pound) sold at Indiana farmers markets. They were available from January (\$2.00 per pound) until October (\$4.00 per pound). Figure 18 shows that highest and lowest prices of slicing tomatoes overlapped from January until May, and diverged from May until October, which may be due to higher supply of tomatoes, starting summer season. The highest price paid for slicing tomato was \$5.25 per pound (late July to mid-August and late September), while the lowest price was \$1.00 per pound (mid-August to early September). Interestingly, lowest and highest prices of tomatoes overlapped from January until mid-May, with most of their variation occurring in summer and early fall.

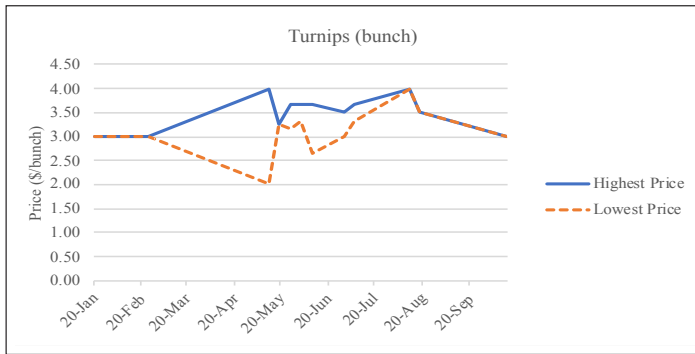


Figure 19. Highest and lowest prices of turnips (\$/bunch) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Turnips per bunch (Figure 19) were sold from late January (\$3.00 per bunch) to late September (\$3.00 per bunch) at Indiana farmers markets. The highest price was \$4.00 per bunch in May and August; the lowest price was \$2.00 per bunch, also in May. Most of the price variation of turnips occurred from February until August.

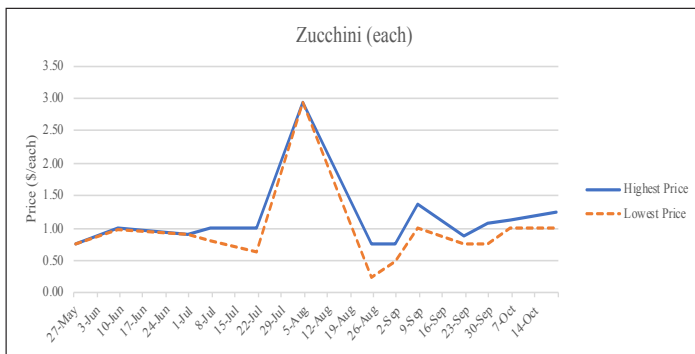


Figure 20. Highest and lowest prices of zucchini (\$/each) sold at Indiana farmers markets in 2019.

Figure 20 shows zucchini was sold at Indiana farmers market from late May (\$0.75/each) to mid-October (\$1.00 to \$1.25/each). Highest and lowest prices followed each other closely in 2019. In mid-July, prices increased considerably to reach \$3.00/each, then fell in late August. The price of each zucchini ranged between \$3.00 and \$0.25/each.

Conclusion

This article is the result of data collection efforts from the Purdue Farmers Market Pricing project developed by the Purdue Horticulture Business Extension Program. This publication presents the price trends and market availability of the 20 most frequently sold vegetables at Indiana farmers markets. Data presented from the project show the highest and lowest prices during the 2019 market season. A complete list of prices is available at www.hort.purdue.edu/HortBusiness.

Our reports show that most vegetable prices tend to vary over time. Most of the price variation may be due to supply-demand forces and product characteristics. We expect that increasing the number of farmers selling vegetables would also increase the product diversity and price variation across vegetable varieties and over time. Other factors likely to influence vegetable prices are seasonality, labels, packaging, and cultivars.

Farmers can use information from our report to evaluate the market window for different crops, since many vegetables are not available year-round. This publication can help growers understand what and when to produce. Farmers can also use this report to choose the appropriate crop mix that can help maximize farm profitability. For example, most vegetables tend to experience price hikes at different times of the year. Finally, differences between highest and lowest prices can help farmers understand competition and the importance of adopting marketing and differentiation strategies for price discovery.

Acknowledgements

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