



August 2021

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Small fruit, big local demand

By Brett Wolff, Extension Specialist, Center for Crop Diversification

In discussions with direct marketers (including farmers markets, on-farm and roadside markets, as well as Community Supported Agriculture operations) across the state, an informal theme that continually arises is the popularity and demand for fresh local fruit, and particularly small fruit like strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and others. The Kentucky Horticulture Council (KHC) has been working to support more growers to start growing these popular crops through its Kentucky Small Fruits Initiative. As a complement to that initiative, the Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) and KHC worked with an intern (Agricultural Economics undergraduate Grace Jenkins) this summer to assemble a small fruit market snapshot for Kentucky growers. The full extension publication will be published through the CCD later this year, but some initial results from a farmers market manager survey provide some data to support the assertion that Kentucky consumers are hungry for Kentucky small fruit.

What's inside

CCD resources update 3
 Presentations sought 4

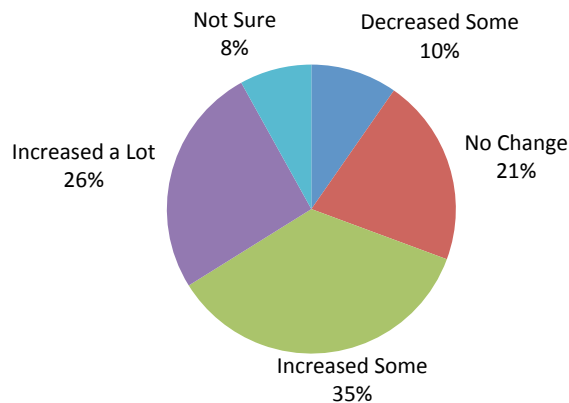
Coming up

Sept. 20 - Structures for Cut Flower Production, 5:30 p.m. CDT, via Zoom. Part of the UK Cooperative Extension Service Virtual Cut Flower Short Course. Speaker: Dr. W. Garrett Owen. For details, see **Page 3**.

Sept. 30 - Practical Tools for a Climate-Resilient Farm: Cover Crops, Biochar, and On-Farm Water Management field day via Zoom. 1:30 EDT. Free, but registration is required. Organic Association of Kentucky field day. For details and to register, go to <https://www.oak-ky.org/farmer-field-days-2021>.

Oct. 24-25 - Tri-state CSA Conference, Archbold, OH. Hosted by Michigan St., Ohio St. and Purdue. \$75 per person. Learn how to start a CSA or make your CSA more successful. For details, [click here](#).

FIGURE 1: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE TREND IN FRUIT SALES OVER THE LAST 3 YEARS AT YOUR LOCAL MARKET?



Continued on Page 2



FIGURE 2: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE STRENGTH OF DEMAND FOR LOCAL SMALL FRUIT PRODUCTS AT YOUR MARKET?

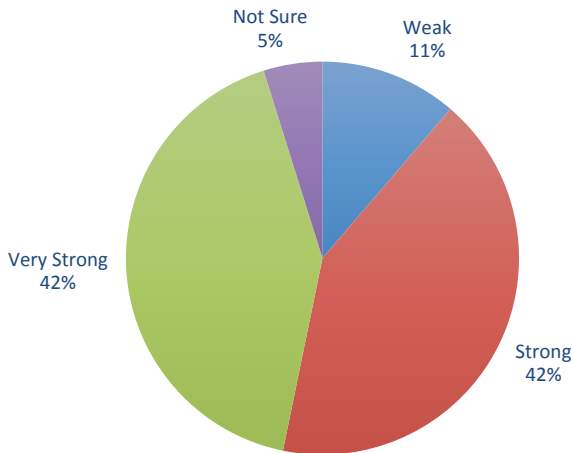


FIGURE 3: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE VOLUME OF SMALL FRUIT PRODUCTS (FRESH AND VALUE-ADDED) AVAILABLE AT YOUR MARKET?

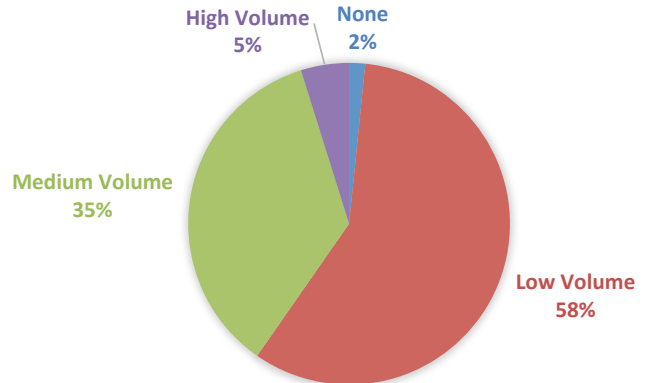
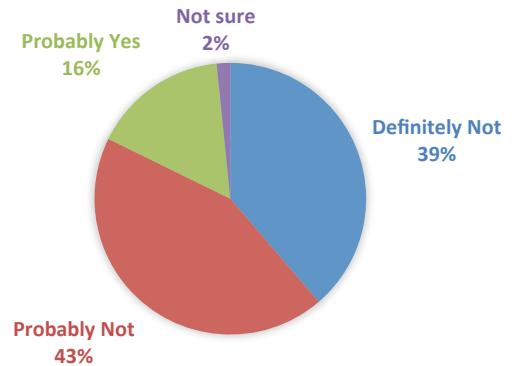


FIGURE 4: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE ENOUGH SMALL FRUIT PRODUCTS AVAILABLE AT YOUR MARKET TO MEET THE DEMAND OF CUSTOMERS?

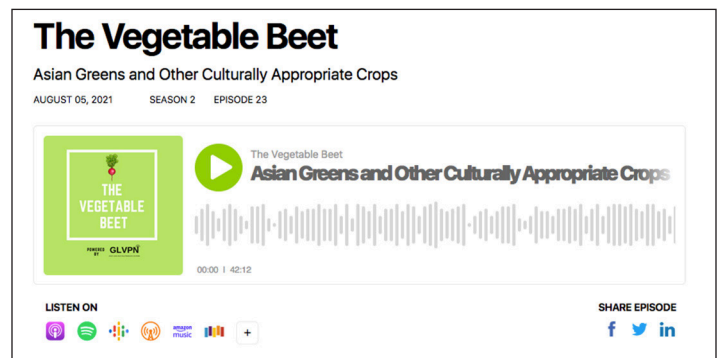


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With Kentucky farmers markets regularly reporting strawberry prices between \$5 and \$8 per quart, blackberry prices between \$5 and \$12 per quart, and blueberry prices of \$7 to \$12 per quart, these fruit could be great supplemental products for sellers looking to expand their offerings with something customers want. In addition to traditional direct markets, small fruit also play a critical role in the product mix for agritourism, U-Pick, produce auction and wholesale operations. It’s crucial to evaluate all costs associated with production, handling and marketing any new crop, and perennial systems have different needs and payback timelines. Good market research will help increase the odds of profitability with any crop. Check out all the CCD fruit resources here: <https://www.uky.edu/ccd/production/crop-re-sources/fruit>, and take a look at our publication and videos on [What to Think About Before You Plant](#) before starting any new specialty crop enterprise.

Podcast features Hort agent Pratt, Common Earth Gardens

The Vegetable Beet Podcast from the Great Lakes Vegetable Producers Network featured Jefferson County Horticulture Extension Agent Bethany Pratt, Common Earth Gardens Executive Director Laura Stevens, and Agricultural Consultant Stephen Bartlett on August 4th to discuss Asian Greens and Other Culturally Appropriate Crops. For more information about Common Earth Gardens, visit <https://cclou.org/common-earth-gardens/>. You can listen to a recording of



the podcast at <https://veggiebeet.buzzsprout.com/1038118/8981186-asian-greens-and-other-culturally-appropriate-crops>.

Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference seeking proposals for 2022 presentations

From the Kentucky Horticulture Council

The 2022 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference Planning Committee is seeking proposals for educational presentations. We welcome ideas for mini-sessions (20 minutes total; 15 minutes speaking and 5 minutes for Q&A) or longer presentations (30 or 60 minutes including Q&A). We are especially interested in presentations from local growers.

Session topics should be highly focused for produce growers in Kentucky. Topics can address production methods, research results, business management strategies and best practices. Specific content requests from recent conference surveys include: variety performance, crop rotation, processing, post-harvest handling, growing in high tunnels, urban farming, strategies for

marketing and soil health.

This event historically has an attendance of 500 participants including growers, exhibitors, speakers, organizational representatives and governmental agencies, with more than 70 educational sessions, grower roundtables, a trade show and a Kentucky wine tasting. The full agenda with registration details will be published in late October.

We encourage you to consider submitting a proposal to share your knowledge, passion and innovation with others or suggest speakers you'd like to hear! Submit proposals [online](#) or by email to info@kyhortcouncil.org.

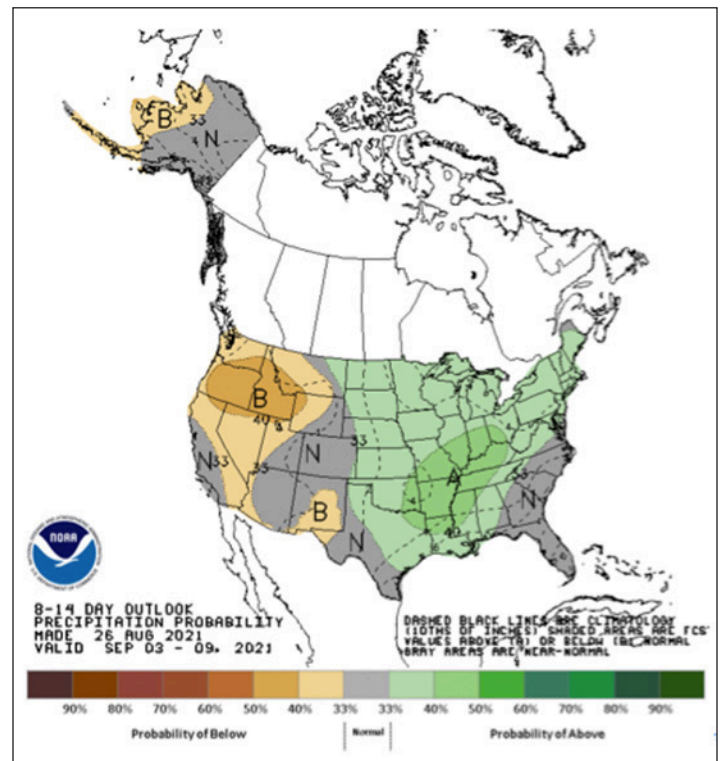
Deadline to submit proposals is September 15th, 2021. Presentation date and time will be confirmed with speakers by October 15th, 2021.

Warmer than average start to September, wetter overall

By Joshua Knight, Sr. Extension Associate, Horticulture

The NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is forecasting an above average chance of warmer than average temperatures for Kentucky. The warm days we've had during August should continue into the first days of September. After the first week, the picture for temperatures becomes less certain as current models indicate an equal chance for above average and below average temperatures across the Commonwealth for the rest of September.

The forecast for precipitation is much easier: wetter than average. The pattern of above average precipitation rates is expected to last all month for Kentucky and states in the region.



USDA offers help with organic certification costs

From the United States Department of Agriculture

WASHINGTON – Organic producers and handlers can now apply for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds to assist with the cost of receiving or maintaining organic certification. Applications for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) are due Nov. 1st, 2021.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent during the 2021 and any subsequent program year. Producers can be reimbursed for expenses

made between Oct. 1st, 2020 and Sept. 30th, 2021 including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

For 2021, OCCSP will reimburse 50% of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$500 for each of the following categories (or "scopes"): crops, wild crops, livestock, processing/handling and state organic program fees. Organic farmers and ranchers may apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency.

To learn more, please visit the [OCCSP webpage](#), visit usda.gov/organic, or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

Specialty crop growers should apply for NAP

From the Kentucky FSA Newsletter

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to you for crops that aren't eligible for crop insurance to protect against lower yields or crops unable to be planted due to natural disasters including freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, flood, excessive heat and qualifying drought (includes native grass for grazing), among others.

In order to participate, you must obtain NAP coverage for the crop year by the applicable deadline using form CCC-471 "Application for Coverage" and pay the service fee. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are also required to submit an acceptable crop acreage report. Additionally, NAP participants must provide:

- The quantity of all harvested production of the crop in which the producer held an interest during the crop year
- The disposition of the harvested crop, such as whether it is marketable, unmarketable, salvaged or used differently than intended
- Acceptable crop production records (when requested by FSA)

Producers who fail to report acreage and produc-

tion information for NAP-covered crops could see reduced or zero NAP assistance. These reports are used to calculate the approved yield.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, turf grass, ginseng, honey and syrup.

For more information on NAP, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#), or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Thanks for reading!

If you know someone who would enjoy our newsletter, or you're not subscribed yet yourself, visit www.uky.edu/ccd/newsletter and click "Subscribe Now." Or call Brett Wolff at 859-218-4384, or Christy Cassady at 859-257-1477. Stay up to date with the Center on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ccduky/>

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