

The LocalHarvest Price Survey: How Does Local Compare?

THANK YOU for your interest in participating in our grassroots research into the question of how the price of local produce compares to non-local produce.

There are many good reasons to buy local food, and the benefits go far beyond price. But in this survey, we are looking only at price. Freshness, quality, nutritional value, and the socioeconomic value of buying directly from family farmers are all great reasons to buy local produce. But this survey is about price. (And sticker price, at that: we are not factoring in the cost of oil or shipping.)

Some farmers may be sensitive to the price question. They will want you to remember the other reasons that buying local is a wise and sound decision. You may want to say up front that you understand that price is but one measure of value.

Though we realize that in many parts of the country, the farmers market season will be ending soon, we would like to get an initial look at this question this Fall. We will use what we learn in this pilot survey to develop a more thorough investigation next summer.

This survey looks only at produce. We may compare prices of meat, dairy products, etc. at another time, but for now we are focusing on cool season produce. We are also excluding CSAs from this assessment, even though we know that some represent a great financial bargain for members. To include them would require assessing the whole seasons' worth of produce, and that is beyond the scope of this survey.

There is a lot of information in these pages, and it is important to understand that the data must be collected carefully and uniformly if we are to get reasonably accurate results. **Please read it all carefully, and if you have questions, please send them to survey@localharvest.org.**

Please print out this survey and take it with you when you do your comparison shopping. When you have found as much information as you can, use this form to complete our online survey, where your data will be compiled with others' from all over the country.

Please complete this survey by December 1!

The online survey can be found at: <http://www.localharvest.org/survey>

Alternately, you may mail this form to Erin Barnett, LocalHarvest, 809 Linden St. South, Northfield, MN 55057. Entering your own data online is much preferred, as it will save us a lot of time. If you can't enter your data online, we would rather you mail it in than have it be lost.

If you plan to mail in your survey, please complete the following information. If you will be entering your data online, proceed to page 2.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK ON THIS PROJECT!

The LocalHarvest Price Survey: *Please read this page carefully!*

It is very important to note whether the produce you are comparing is

“conventional” or “organic.” For this survey, please label produce as ‘organic’ if it is *either* certified organic, or “certifiable.” By certifiable, we mean that it was grown using organic practices, but the farm is not officially certified as organic. Ask the farmer if you don’t know whether the produce was grown using organic practices. ‘Conventional’ will be used for all other farmers market produce, and all produce purchased at a store that is not explicitly labeled “organic.”

Your data will be most valuable if you are able to compare two organic prices or two conventional prices for the same item. If you go to the farmers market first, and both organically grown and conventional produce is available, you may want to write down the prices for each, and then find out which is available at the grocery store.

Use “OG” to indicate organically grown produce, and “C” to indicate conventional.

It is very, very important that you record the price PER POUND.

Most items in stores are sold by the pound, but many items at farmers markets are sold by the piece. We need you to please do a little math for these items.

If the item is sold by weight: “Cauliflower \$1.79/lb.” Just write down the cost per pound. But if the price is for several pounds of food, please record the price per ONE pound.

Example: 5 lbs. potatoes for \$1.49. You divide the total price (1.49) by the number of pounds (5) and write down the result – \$0.30/lb.

If the item is sold by the piece: Examples of “by the piece” are things like, “Winter squash are \$3 a piece, or two for \$5.” OR “Cucumbers are three for \$1.”

Please try to weigh ‘by the piece’ products. There are scales in stores, so please weigh all ‘by the piece’ products sold at a store, and then figure out the price per pound.

Ways to get a weight on ‘by the piece’ produce at the farmers market:

- ask the farmer to weigh it
- if that vendor doesn’t have a scale, ask another farmer at the market to weigh it
- take it home and weigh it on a kitchen scale
- take it to the grocery store and weigh it there (check with the store first)

To figure out the price per pound for an item sold by the piece, first weigh the item. Note the total number of pounds, and divide the price by that number. Example: a winter squash is \$3. It weighs 4.5 lbs. Divide \$3.00 by 4.5 to get \$0.67/lb. Another example: a cucumber is \$0.75. It weighs 0.5 lbs. Divide \$0.75 by 0.5 to get \$1.50/lb.

If some of the produce is sold by the piece, and you have no way of weighing it, skip it and go on to the next item.

The LocalHarvest Price Survey

We also need to know what “type” of place you are shopping. Please choose from this list when completing the “types” information below.

Farmers market
 Regular grocery store
 Specialty grocery store

Roadside stand/farm stand/on-farm store
 Discount grocery store
 Food co-op

Please note – not all items below will be available locally at this time of year. We recommend going to the farmers market first, filling in prices for whatever foods are available there, and then going to the store(s) to gather prices for those same items. **Please look for “common” types of each product and try avoid “heirloom types.” (e.g. use a regular cucumber, not an Armenian or English type)**

Name of Location 1: _____ Type _____

Name of Location 2: _____ Type _____

(Optional) Name of Location 3: _____ Type _____

	Location 1		Location 2		(Location 3)	
	Price per pound	OG/C	Price per pound	OG/C	(Price per pound)	(OG/C)
<i>Example: broccoli</i>	<i>\$2.50 ea./1.25 lb. = \$2 per lb</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>\$1.89/lb.</i>	<i>C</i>		
Apples						
Broccoli						
Cabbage						
Carrots						
Cauliflower						
Celery						
Green beans						
Kale						
Leeks						
Lettuce						
Onions						
Potatoes						
Salad mix						
Spinach						
Summer squash						
Sweet potatoes						
Swiss chard						
Turnips						
Winter squash						

Great work! Thank you!
Please upload your data to www.localharvest.org/survey by December 1.