

# ECONOMIC & POLICY UPDATE

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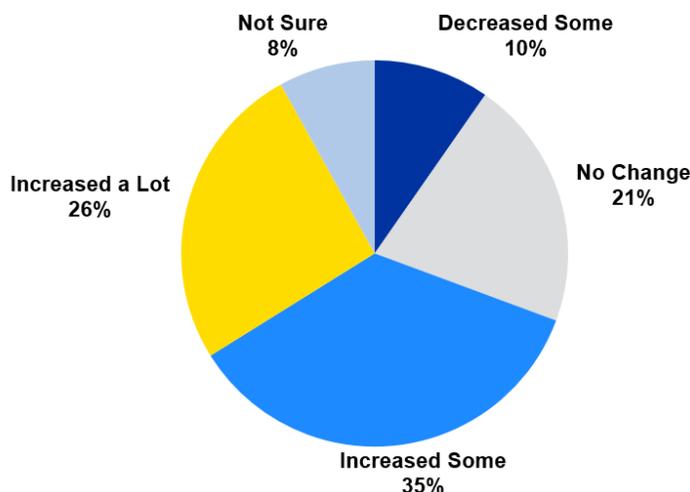
## Small Fruit, Big Local Demand

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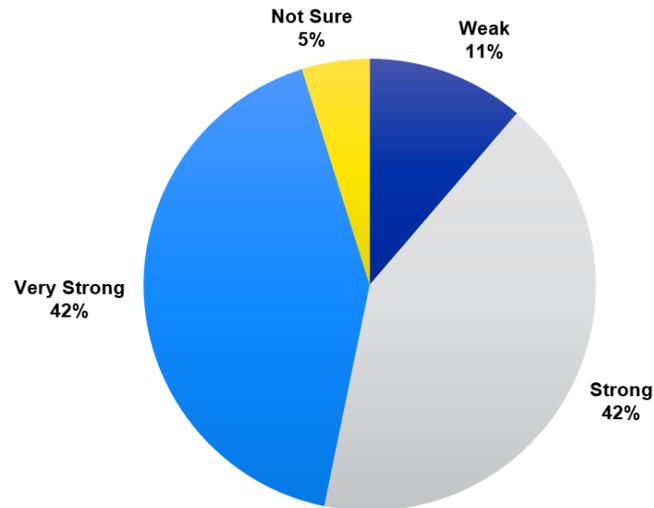
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In discussions with Direct Marketers (including farmers markets, on-farm and roadside markets, as well as Community Supported Agriculture operations) across the state an informal theme that continually arises is the popularity and demand for fresh 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 this popular crop through their [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.

Figure 1: How Would You Describe the Trend in Fruit Sales over the Last Three Years at Your Local Market?



*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?*

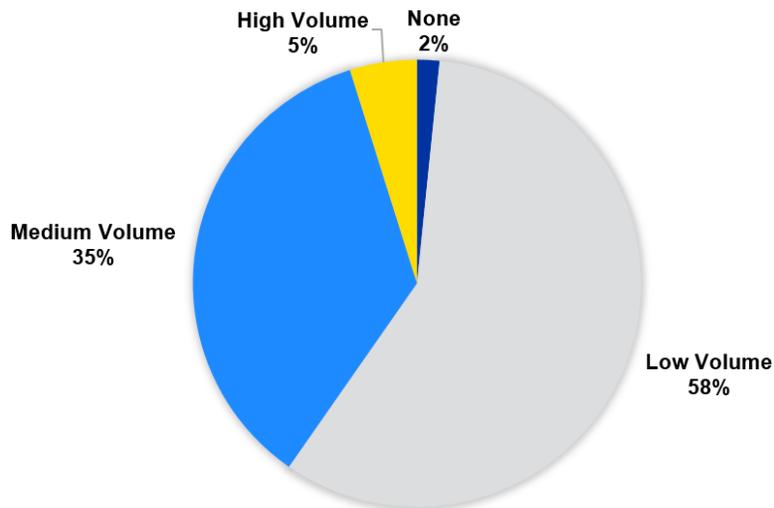
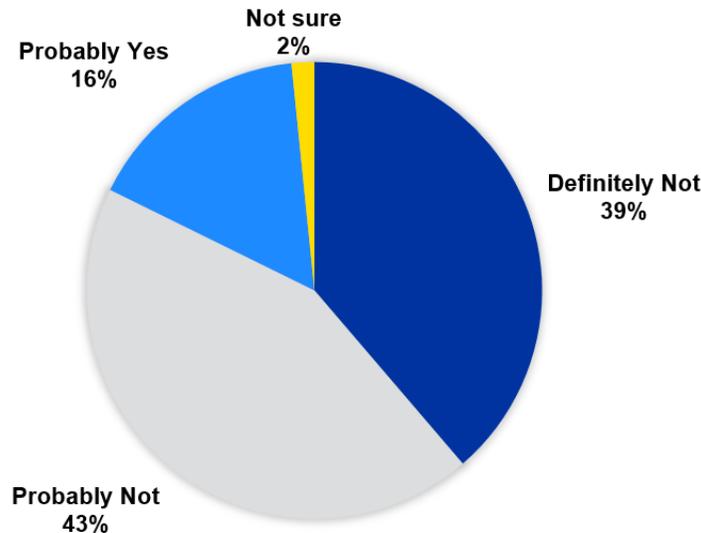


Figure 4: Do You Currently Have Enough Small Fruit Products Available at Your Market to Meet the Demand of Customers?



With Kentucky Farmer’s Markets regularly reporting strawberry prices between \$5 and \$8 per quart, blackberry prices between \$5 and \$12 per quart, and blueberry prices of \$7-12 per quart, these fruits 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](#) and take a look at our publication and videos on [What to Think About Before You Plant](#) before starting any new specialty crop enterprise.

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