

8/7 Maine Local Market Report

This market report was compiled by Maine Farmland Trust and MOFGA for the purpose of supporting farmer and buyer communication and creating clarity in a rapidly changing market. Observations are collected biweekly, for this report over the week of 8/3-7, from the same group of wholesale buyers and diversified farmers concentrated in the Portland and Mid-Coast markets. Huge gratitude to those folks for taking the time. This information is solely for informational and observational purposes, and is likely most helpful for small, diversified farms selling to the local wholesale marketplace (such as stores and restaurants), and direct to consumer at farmers' markets and farmstands. We hope the Report's insights from week to week, and over the course of the season, help you assess and gauge your own experience and observations about supply and demand trends. Any questions feel free to directly contact Alex at MFT (alex@mainefarmlandtrust.org) or Nicolas at MOFGA (nlindholm@mofga.org).

Key Takeaways:

- Short report this week - folks are busy with the season and no buyer responses.
- Farmers report demand for summer crops remains good, with some consumer transition away from crops in abundance such as cucumbers and summer squashes.
- Most farmers report direct to consumer outlets remain strong, although wholesale to stores isn't as consistently strong.
- Supply is pretty much meeting current demand, although a gap is expected as farmers transition from field crops to fall tunnels.
- Continued concern about demand changes after Labor Day.
- Squash a spider, leave your car windows down, or do whatever you do to bring the rain, because we need it!

Buyer responses:

Overview: No buyer responses this week.

Farmer responses:

1. **What trends are you observing right now in current consumer demand?**
 - a. **Direct to Consumer/Farmers Markets:** Demand for summer crops remains good, especially for tomatoes, blueberries, cukes, green/yellow beans --some customer fatigue with zukes and summer squash, but most reports still indicate good demand. One farmer states that they're seeing a steep decline in some of their direct-to-consumer ordering platforms that were really amplified by COVID-19. Bulk buying of some items like pickling cukes, canning tomatoes, blueberries and beans has been reported.

- b. **Wholesale to stores:** Good demand for zukes, cukes, tomatoes, shishitos, and herbs. One farm reports sales aren't what they historically have been, but are the best they've been so far this year. Another farm reports a slight summer slump in sales.
 - c. **Restaurants:** Demand is still spotty, though most are placing orders.
2. **Is your supply meeting demand? Is there unmet demand for certain products?**
- a. Most farms report their supplies are meeting demand. A few exceptions coming from individual farms include: unmet demand for red slicing tomatoes (with less demand for heirloom varieties), unmet demand for blueberries, watermelon, green beans, and corn. One report came in of an oversupply of zukes, summer squash and cukes, but that's often to be expected this time of year.
3. **Are you seeing or anticipating any changes that will affect your supply and demand in the coming weeks?**
- a. Many farms report needing rain. There may be some gaps in supply ahead as farms are transitioning from field back into fall tunnel crops. One farm reports a fungal disease in their first tomato tunnel will lead to a lull until the second tunnel comes in. Another farm is seeing a probable gap in cukes and summer squash when the field is finished before their first tunnels come in.
4. **Any useful resources, news, or data you want to share?**
- a. There is a considerable amount of concern about market demand after Labor Day, with farmers wondering if farmers markets and wholesale accounts will slow down or carry on at current levels into the fall --much uncertainty as the tourist season winds down. One farm continues to plan and plant for a variety of new possible markets going into winter.
 - b. One farm says they have seen some success in their efforts targeting social media ads to their local community and getting business to their online store. They ask: Are other farms trying social media ads? Finding success?