



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Beth Rasgorshek inspects organic watermelon seed at her farm near Nampa, Idaho, on Aug. 19. Organic fruit and vegetable sales saw large increases, both in dollars and volume, in the second quarter of 2016 compared with the same period in 2015.

Organic produce sales soar double digits in second quarter

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

Organic fruit and vegetable sales saw large increases, both in dollars and volume, in the second quarter of 2016 compared with the same period in 2015.

According to United Fresh Produce Association's Fresh-Facts on Retail report, non-organic produce sales were also up during the second quarter and value-added fruit and vegetable sales continued to grow.

But organic sales were particularly strong.

According to the report, organic produce sales were up 15 percent in dollar value and climbed past \$1 billion in the second quarter. Volume increased at the same rate, "which indicates the growth is more than a reflection of higher prices," the report's authors said.

United Fresh represents every segment of the fresh produce industry, including growers, shippers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, food-service operators and fresh cut processors.

The report's data was based on sales at more than 18,000 stores.

Nine percent of all produce sales during the second quarter were for organic products, according to the report.

Weekly dollar sales per store for organic vegetables were up 13.6 percent and weekly volume sales per store increased 13 percent despite a 0.51 percent increase in the average retail price.

For organic fruit, dollar sales increased 18.8 percent and volume was up 17.9 percent despite a 0.73 percent increase in average retail price.

Weekly dollar sales per store for organic apples were up 6.2 percent but volume was down 7.8 percent due to a 15.2 percent increase in average retail price.

On the non-organic side, the report showed strong second quarter growth for many commodities, including apples, avocados, berries, citrus, onions, cucumbers and tomatoes.

Bananas, grapes, cherries and melons all experienced sales and volume decreases.

Highlights of the report include:

Weekly dollars sales of apples per store were up 13.3 percent and volume was up 0.1 percent despite a 13.2 percent increase in average retail price.

Weekly dollar sales for avocados were up 2.8 percent, volume was up 5.6 percent and price was down 2.7 percent.

For potatoes, average weekly dollar sales per store were up 3.5 percent because of a 5 percent increase in price but volume was down 1.5 percent.

Onions showed strong growth with 9.5 percent growth in dollar sales and 8.8 percent growth in volume despite a price increase of 0.6 percent.

Dollar sales for stone fruits were down 2.8 percent but volume increased 1.3 percent while the average retail price was down 4 percent.

The report also shows that value-added fruit and vegetable sales increased 3 percent and 8 percent, "which reiterates the shopper's demand for more convenient options."

Deere claims rival sparked antitrust fight

Dispute centers on acquisition of high-speed planting company



JOHN DEERE

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Deere & Co. claims the federal government wants to block its acquisition of a seed technology firm at the behest of a competing equipment manufacturer.

In August, the U.S. Department of Justice accused Deere of unlawful anti-competitive behavior due to its plan to buy Precision Planting, a subsidiary of the Monsanto Co., for \$190 million.

According to the government's complaint, the merger would allow Deere to control 86 percent of the high-speed planters that allow farmers to double the speed at which they plant seeds.

Deere has now responded by claiming that the Department of Justice initially cleared the merger, "only to change its mind and bring this

lawsuit when a Deere competitor protested."

"However, it is a fundamental maxim that antitrust laws are meant to protect competition, not competitors," according to Deere's answer. "Growers deserve the benefits of this transaction and the increased innovation, competition, and consumer choice that a combination of Deere and Precision Planting will create."

Deere is also asking a federal judge to provide confidential information used by DOJ to file its complaint to attorneys from Deere and Monsanto.

DOJ's complaint is based on "investigative material" that was largely provided by CNH Industrial, a rival farm machinery company that leases Precision Planting technology, according to Deere's response.

"In this case, the Deere competitors, especially CNH, are the driving force behind the government's investigation," the document said.

Before the merger, Precision Planting licensed its high-speed planting technology and sold retrofit kits to farmers, who could then install the equipment on existing planters.

Deere denies the government's accusation that the merger reduces competition, arguing that the deal will give more farmers access to Precision Planting technology due to its extensive network of retail outlets.

"In short, the transaction will increase competition and promote consumer freedom by increasing the total number of market players," Deere said. "Restraining this vibrant competition and greater consumer choice in the narrow interest of a particular competitor is not in the public's interest."

CNH, meanwhile, has asked to intervene in the lawsuit and opposes the release of confidential information gathered by DOJ.



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- CPR/AED Training (Register online)
- Forklift Certification Classes (Register online)
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- Back by Popular Demand: Wed. Evening Dine Around Oregon. Tickets available online.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- Meetings:** Oregon Farm Bureau Luncheon (by invitation) 503-399-1701
Training: CORE No registration required - 2 to 4* credit hours (Repeated Thursday)
● 10:30am - 12:30pm • Kaci Buhl, Oregon State University; **Worker Protections Standards** (2 CORE) In January of 2017, new Worker Protection Standards (WPS) for agriculture and forestry operators will come into place. This session will help you determine what WPS requirements apply to your operation and how to comply, including exceptions, restrictions, exemptions, options, and examples. Additionally, new training requirements for handler and worker employees will be covered.
● 12:00-2:00pm • AED/ CPR Registration required - class size limited. Conference Room 1. Provided by Pacific Health & Safety, training conforms to National Standards used by American Heart Association. All participants receive certification and books. Register online at www.wvaexpo.com/ classes. Fee is \$25 per person.
● 12:30 - 1:30pm • Lunch Break
● 1:30pm - 4:30pm • Melissa Scherr, ODA; **Pollinator Protection** (2 CORE + 1 Credit) Pollinator Protection: Declines, Pesticide Exposure and Developing Best Management Practices for Oregon Agriculture. Melissa is tasked with developing the Oregon Managed Pollinator Protection Plan. MUST ATTEND ALL 3 HOURS; 2 CORE, 1 Other

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

- Meetings:** Pennington Seed Growers Breakfast (by invitation)
Training: Forklift Certification Training (Free with admission)
● 1:00pm - 3:00pm with driving test to follow Includes written and driving requirements, provided FREE by Overton Training. Class size limited advanced registration online at www.wvaexpo.com
Dine Around Oregon - Back by popular demand!
● 5:00pm - 8:00pm: \$12 Admission in advance online at www.wvaexpo.com (or at the door while tickets last.) Ticketed progressive, hearty dinner event featuring food and products from Oregon. 4-6 serving stations throughout the Expo. Enjoy Oregon beef, lamb and cheese, produce, wine and brew!

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

- Training:** CORE training — Repeated from Tuesday, November 15th, 2016
● 10:30am - 12:30pm • Kaci Buhl, Oregon State University; **Worker Protections Standards** (2 CORE) In January of 2017, new Worker Protection Standards (WPS) for agriculture and forestry operators will come into place. This session will help you determine what WPS requirements apply to your operation and how to comply, including exceptions, restrictions, exemptions, options, and examples. Additionally, new training requirements for handler and worker employees will be covered.
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