

Three-Year Average Prices & Quantities at Two Selected Kentucky Produce Auctions: 2023-2025

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MARKET OVERVIEW

The produce auction is a wholesale market channel with low barriers to entry, low marketing time required for the grower, and a medium product volume requirement. Prices are lower in this market compared to direct-to-consumer (DTC) markets and reflect seasonal price volatility; however, there is potential for more sales volume through the auction. Quality standards and shelf life are important, and this market may require compliance with stricter food safety practices than a direct-to-consumer grower is used to.

There are several produce auctions located throughout Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and other bordering states. Produce auctions can vary in size, ownership structure, crop variety, and quality standards throughout the region. Many of these auctions are managed by members of Amish and Mennonite communities.

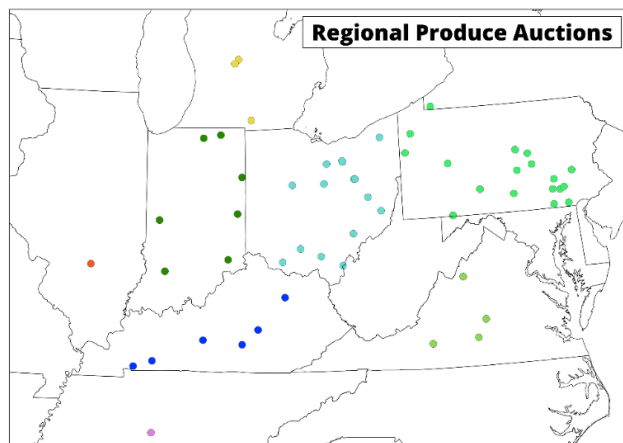


Figure 1: Regional Produce Auctions Map.

The produce auction serves growers as a marketplace to sell large quantities of their fruit and vegetable, nursery, or ornamental crops. It serves buyers as a marketplace to purchase fresh, local products in bulk. Kentucky produce auctions gross millions of dollars in sales each year and play an important role in the region's specialty crop market.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report compares average volumes and average prices for 10 crops from the two largest Kentucky produce auctions for the 2023, 2024, and 2025 seasons. While there are five produce auctions in Kentucky, the two largest auctions are selected for analysis. Previous editions of this report can be found [here](#).

This report provides a three-year average quantity and average price graph for each crop selected for analysis. Each page is specific to a crop, and there is a graph dedicated to the Fairview Produce Auction and to the Lincoln County Produce Auction. Canary melons are only analyzed through the Fairview Produce Auction because there are not enough data available for comparison. The volume unit for each crop is listed in the [CROPS AND UNITS](#) chart and on each page. The units are chosen based on the most common unit listed in price reports. Crops may be sold in smaller or different sizes, but all are converted to standard units to aid in comparison.

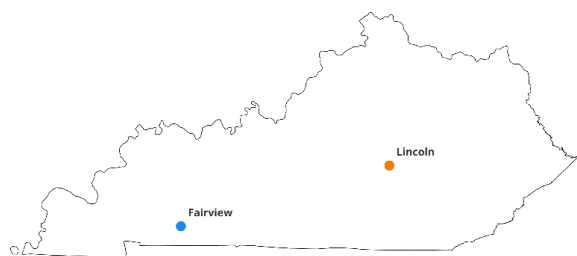


Figure 2: Fairview & Lincoln County Produce Auctions on a Map of Kentucky.

Fairview Produce Auction (FPA): This auction is in Christian County, Kentucky. The nearest cities are Hopkinsville and Russellville. FPA is 160 miles from Louisville, 70 miles from Nashville, and 50 miles from Bowling Green.

Lincoln County Produce Auction (LCPA): This auction is in Lincoln County, Kentucky. Danville and Berea are the nearest cities. LCPA is located 50 miles from Lexington, 105 miles from Louisville, and 130 miles from Cincinnati.

There are additional auctions in the state with prices reported on the UK Centre for Crop Diversification's Website.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The crop pages in this report are organized in alphabetical order. Each crop page includes:

- Three-year **average quantity and average price graphs** for the Fairview Produce Auction and for the Lincoln County Produce Auction.
- Information on **season length** and **packaging standards**.
- Written **commentary** about the 2023-2025 season.
- **Total QTY & Avg. \$ comparison** for 2023, 2024, and 2025. This is based on Fairview and Lincoln County's annual market summary reports.

The information in this report is based on data available to the Center for Crop Diversification and is only a representation of the Fairview Produce Auction and the Lincoln County Produce Auction; however, this report is helpful for growers and auction buyers across the state.

The Total QTY & Avg. \$ tool on each page provides the reader with an idea of how the quantities and prices for items sold at the auction have changed over the last three years. In 2020, the produce auctions saw an increase in products sold through auction, and that trend continues in these post-COVID years.

Please note that the quantity under Total QTY is the sum of the crop sold over the entire year for both auctions, and the price under Avg. \$ is the average of the weekly weighted average prices for both auctions. Again, these values are reported to us from the produce auctions. This price does not represent the highest or lowest price point (for buyers or growers) for a specific crop. This report should be used as a general trend analysis.

If you have questions or comments about how to read, use, or understand this report, please email [Savannah Columbia](mailto:Savannah.Columbia).

NEW: Stay tuned for a hanging baskets (10-inch) & mums (10-12 inch) report coming Spring 2026!

CROPS AND (UNITS)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Beans (1/2 bushel) | • Cucumbers (1/2 bushel) | • Sweet Corn (dozen) |
| • Canary Melon (bin) | • Peppers (1/2 bushel) | • Tomatoes (lbs.) |
| • Cantaloupe (bin & each) | • Pumpkins (bin & each) | • Watermelon (bin & each) |
| | • Strawberries (quart) | |

The crops analyzed in this report include apples, (green) beans, canary melons, cantaloupe, (slicing and pickling) cucumbers, (green bell) peppers, (small and medium/large) pumpkins, strawberries, sweet corn, (#1 and #2 grade, small and canner, and heirloom) tomatoes, and (seedless and seeded) watermelon.

HOW IS THIS REPORT USEFUL TO ME?

Producers may find this information useful when considering:

- What crops to grow and when to grow them. The graphs show when early or late season extension can bring a higher price for specific crops or when a high volume is going through the market, resulting in lower prices.
- How to price products for wholesale or bulk sales, as well as price minimums.
- Whether selling at an auction will fit their operation and market interests.
- How to package their product for sale at the auction. Each crop has a grading & packing section identifying how the auction prefers receiving the product. This information is based on the Fairview Produce Auction's Grower Guidelines.

Auction Managers might use this information for:

- Communicating with prospective growers or buyers about the seasonal activity of various crops in Kentucky.
- Degrees and benefits of various quality premiums (ex. #1 and #2 Grade tomatoes vs. small and canner tomatoes) for different crops.
- Long-term planning for their market.

Buyers can use this information for:

- Observing the beginning, peak, and end of the season for specific crops coming through Kentucky's produce auctions.
- Understanding how the auction's prices compare to prices available from other market outlets.
- Planning outlets for purchasing crops throughout the year.

For those **interested in selling through the produce auctions**:

- Product must be clean and in good condition upon arrival.
- Packaging must also be clean and in good condition upon arrival.
- It is ideal to keep similar items, varieties, and sizes together for ease of selling at the auction. Out-of-state produce must be labeled as such.
- Growers must comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. More information about FSMA and its exemptions can be found [here](#). Your local Extension Office can provide information about FSMA and grower training opportunities.
- Sale calendars and individual auction price reports can be found [here](#). Both 2025 and historical price reports can be found [here](#). Please note that selected crops are used for analysis. There are additional crops sold through the auctions and reported in the individual auction price reports, so take time to explore them.

BEANS, Green

Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: Mid-May – November.

High quantities are observed in June and July, with a dip as August approaches. High price points are observed at the beginning of the season and when the supply dips in August. Price drops as supply peaks in weeks 25 and 26, but remains relatively stable as the season progresses.

“Beans” refers to green beans, specifically.

PACK SIZE: Beans should be packed in waxed ½ bushel boxes. Target net weight is 11-12 lbs.

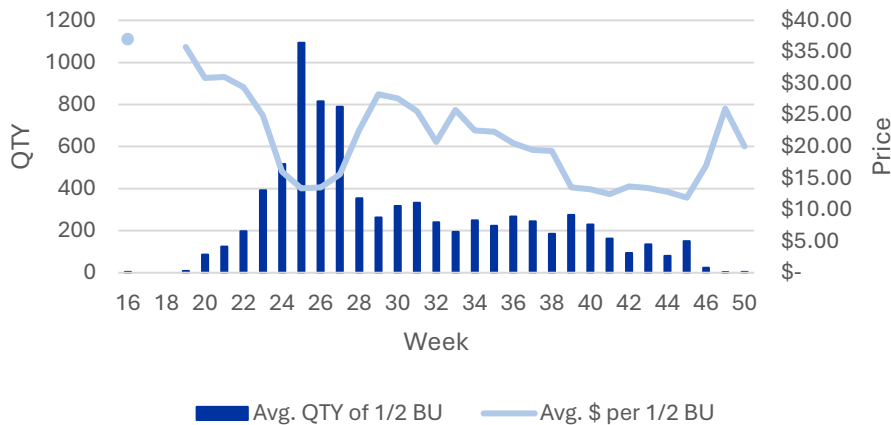
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (1/2 bu.)

2025: 12,027 | \$23.68

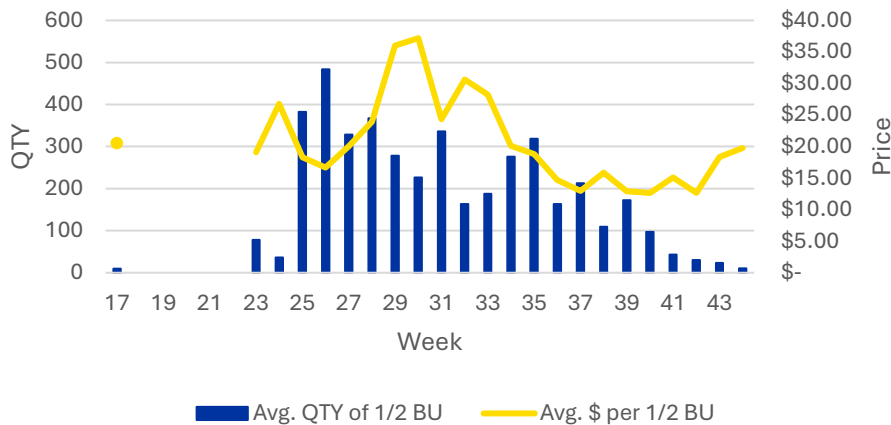
2024: 12,223 | \$19.72

2023: 14,116 | \$15.91

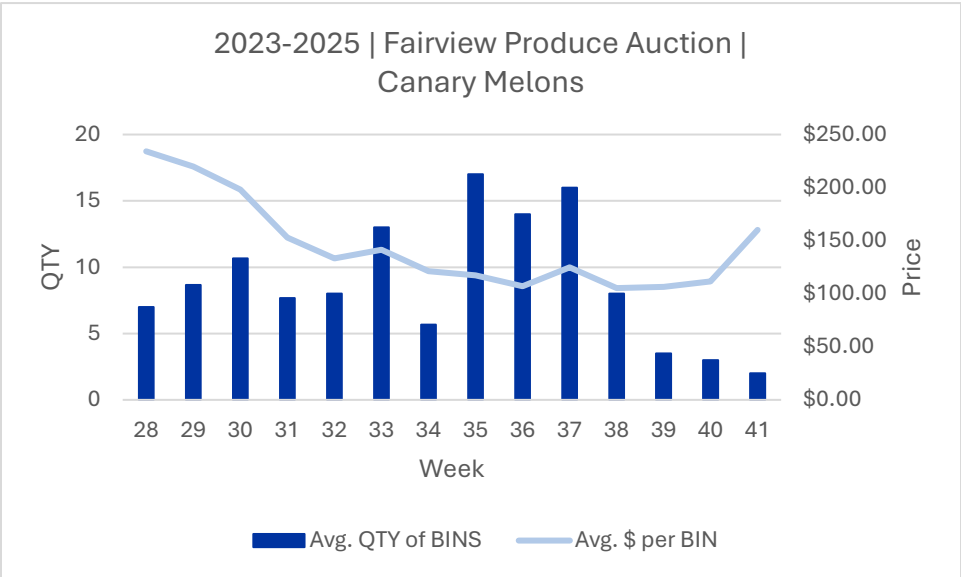
2023-2025 | Fairview Produce Auction | Beans, Green



2023-2025 | Lincoln County Produce Auction | Beans, Green



CANARY MELON



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: July – September

As expected, the bin price is higher when supply is lower at the beginning and end of the season.

PACK SIZE: Canary melons are packed and sold in 24” bins. There has been an increase in the quantity sold through the Fairview Produce Auction over the last three years.

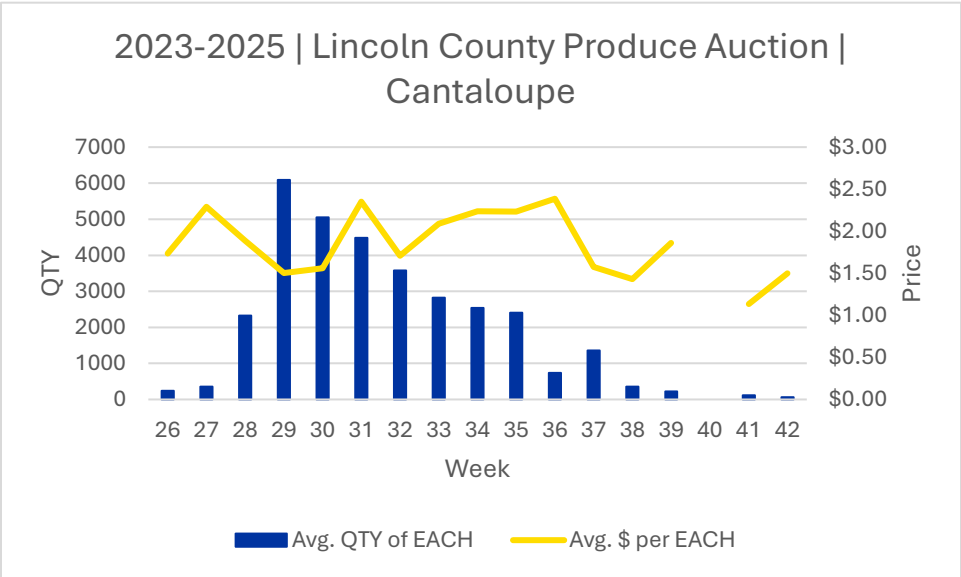
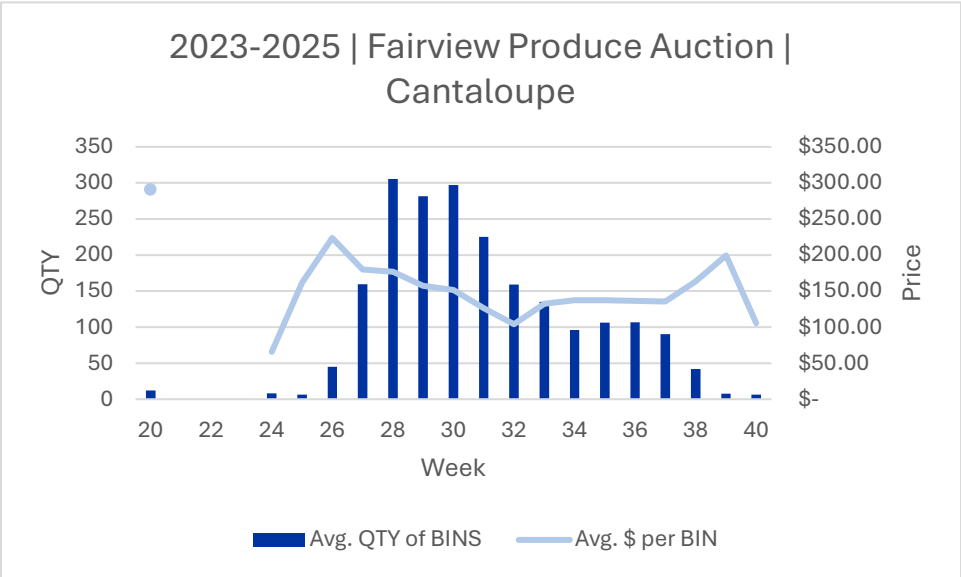
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (BIN)

2025: 112 bins | \$163.52

2024: 150 bins | \$126.03

2023: 35 bins | \$183.96

CANTALOUPE



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: Late June – October.

For cantaloupe, Fairview reports by the 24” bin, while Lincoln County reports by the melon (each). Fairview and Lincoln County follow a similar pattern with a large volume coming through the market in weeks 28-31 and a gentle downward slope as we move into fall. Prices remain strong for melons as Kentucky becomes a larger melon-growing region.

PACK SIZE: Cantaloupes are packed in groups of 10 into 24” bins and sold by the bin. Growers should fill the bin to a stackable level and specify the variety on the bin label.

Total QTY & Avg. \$

Per BIN:

2025: 1,914 | \$174.85

2024: 2,064 | \$145.13

2023: 2,759 | 121.19

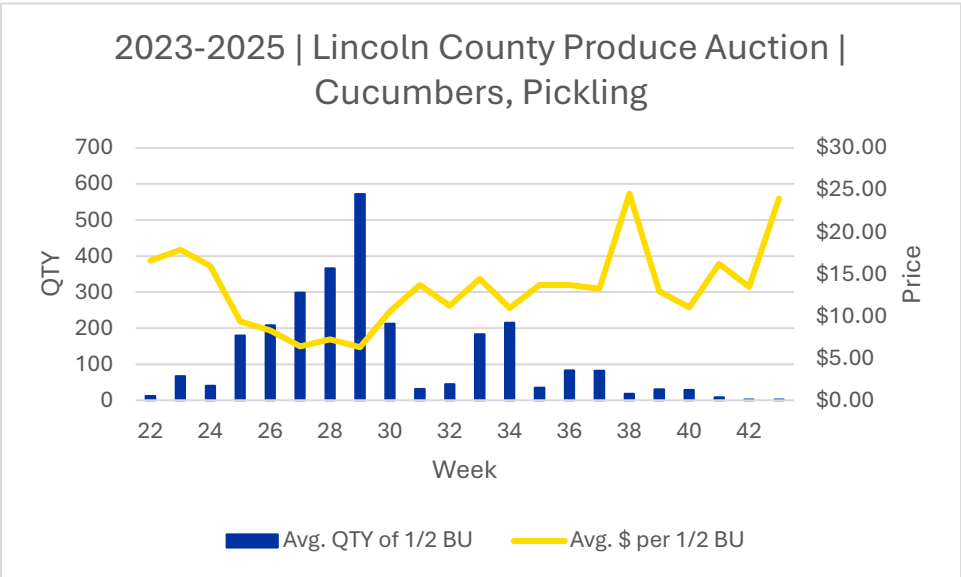
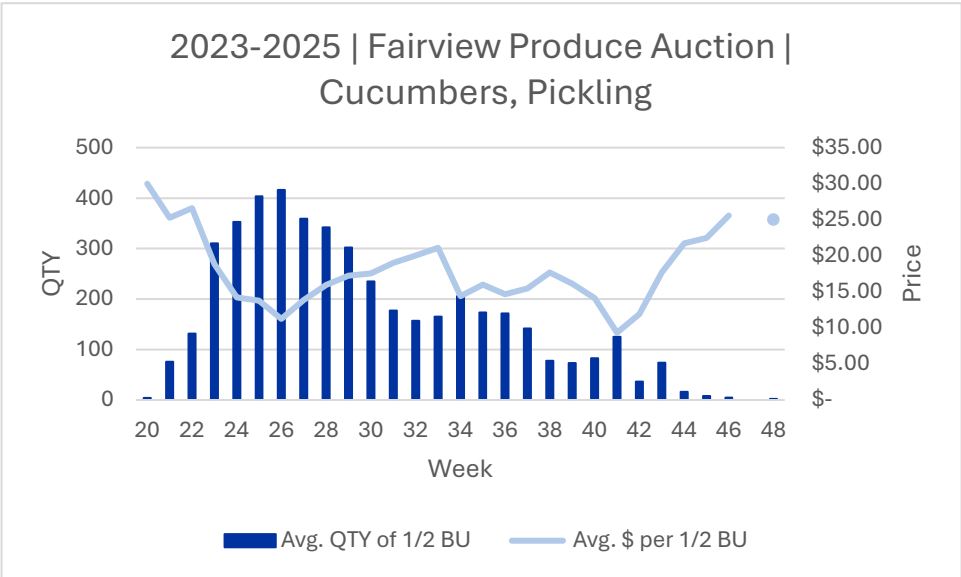
Per CANTALOUPE:

2025: 34,043 | \$1.98

2024: 28,781 | \$1.83

2023: 35,325 | \$1.51

CUCUMBERS, Pickling



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November.

The quantity of pickling cucumbers coming through the Fairview auction is somewhat bell-shaped, with peak supply in weeks 25-27 for Fairview and 28-30 for Lincoln County. These high supply points are accompanied by lower prices. High prices can be observed at the beginning and end of the season for both auctions, as supply is low.

PACK SIZE: Pickling and slicing cucumbers are packed in ½ bushel boxes. Pickling cucumbers should be 3” in length.

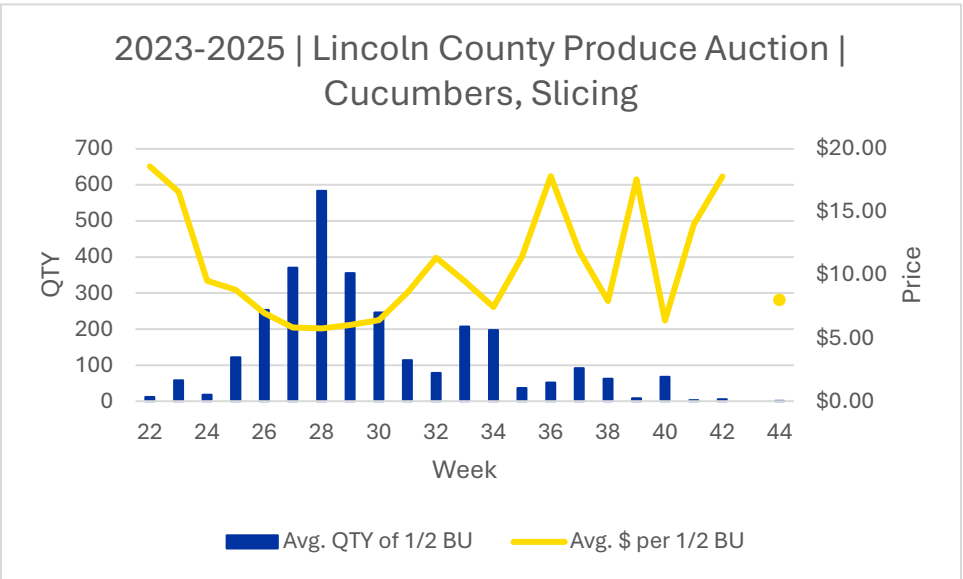
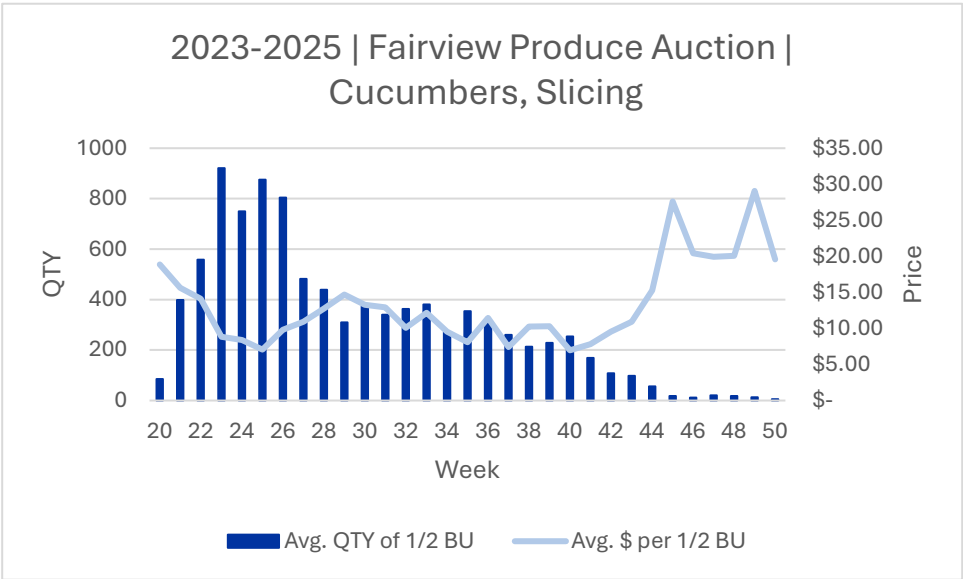
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (1/2 bu.)

2025: 7,660 | \$17.09

2024: 7,812 | \$13.22

2023: 7,323 | \$12.79

CUCUMBERS, Slicing



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November.

The quantity of slicing cucumbers coming through the auctions is similar to that of pickling cucumbers. Peak supply is observed in weeks 23-26 for Fairview and 27-29 for Lincoln County. Lower prices accompany these high supply points. High prices can be observed at the beginning and end of the season for both auctions, as supply is low. There is a see-saw effect of supply and price in the later months, which may reflect weather variability or some other factor.

PACK SIZE: Pickling and slicing cucumbers are packed in ½ bushel boxes. Slicer cucumbers should be 7-8” in length.

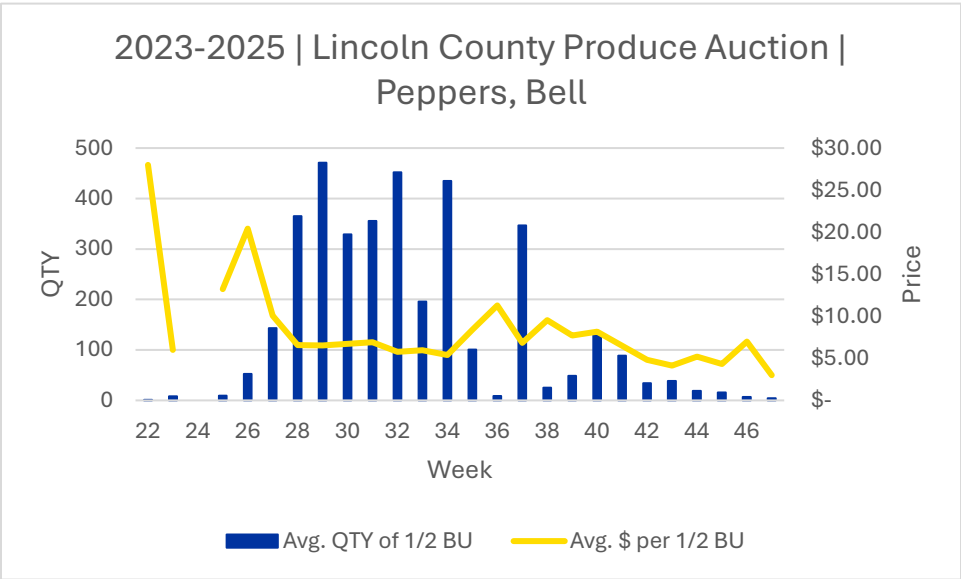
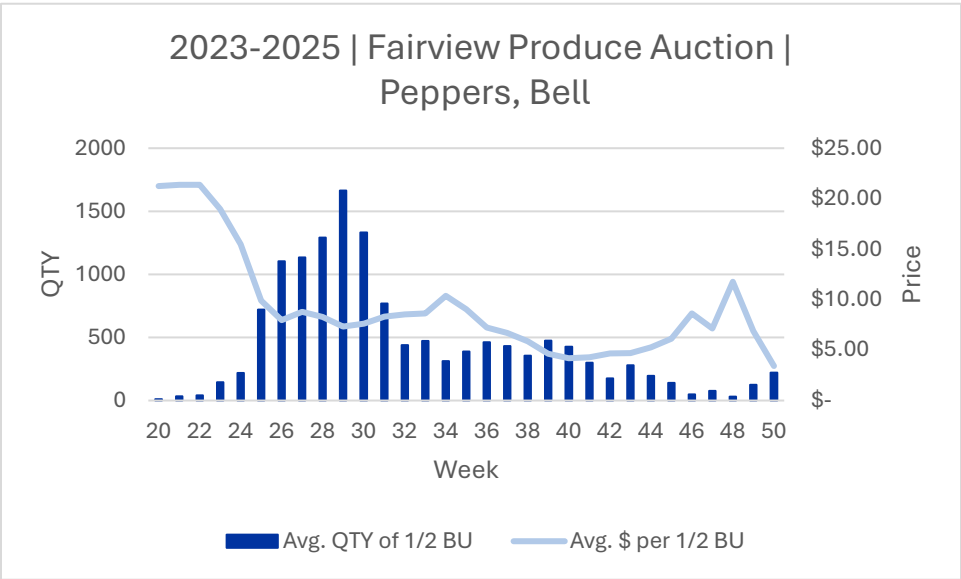
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (1/2 bu.)

2025: 11,381 | \$12.64

2024: 15,286 | \$9.41

2023: 16,060 | \$8.63

PEPPERS, Bell



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November.

Peak pepper season is late July; however, peppers are sold through the auction from the summer through the fall. Early-season peppers come with a high price point; however, prices remain steady throughout the season. There is no price premium for fall peppers, even as the supply decreases.

PACK SIZE: Green bell peppers are packed in 1-bushel boxes. Colored or mixed bell peppers may be packed in 1 or ½ bushel boxes.

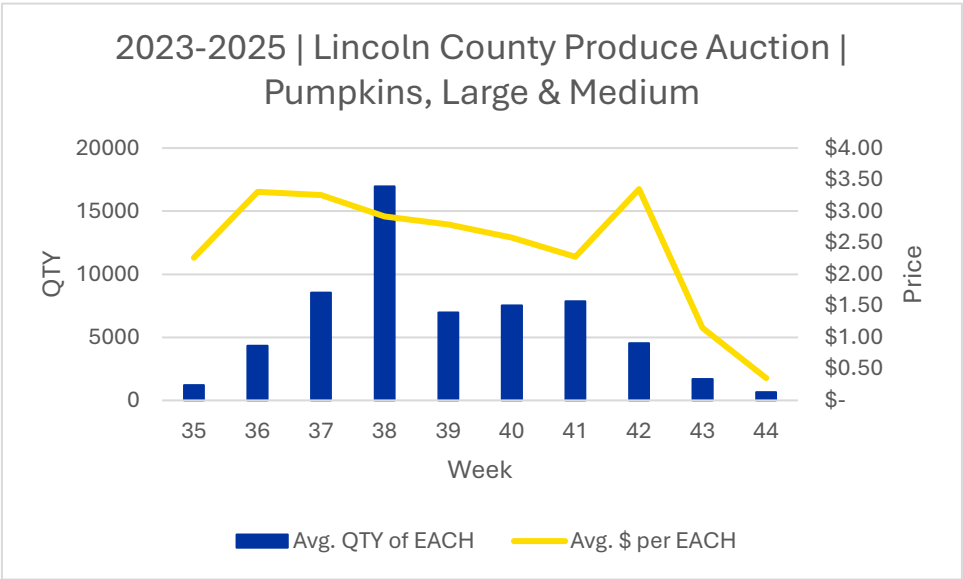
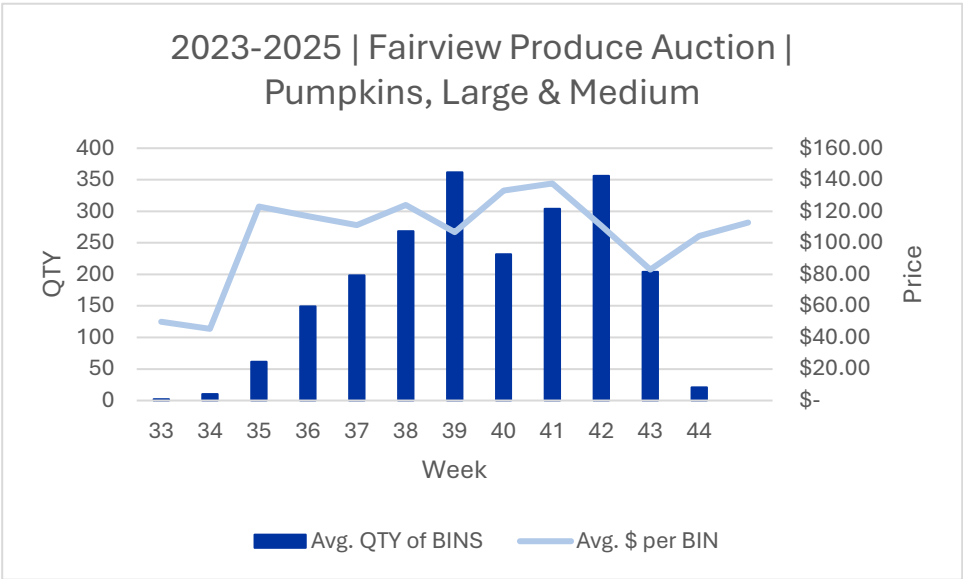
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (1/2 bu.)

2025: 15,708 | \$9.98

2024: 12,460 | \$9.43

2023: 24,937 | \$5.31

PUMPKINS, Large & Medium



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: Late August – October.

Fairview reports pumpkins by the bin, while Lincoln County reports by the unit. Pumpkin season is short. High prices are captured in the first couple of weeks, with Lincoln County’s prices declining over the season and Fairview’s remaining steady. Peak supply is observed in weeks 38 and 39. Large and medium **orange** pumpkins are represented here.

PACK SIZE: Pumpkins are packed in 36" bins. Growers should fill the bin to a stackable level in increments of 5 and group pumpkins based on size.

Total QTY & Avg. \$

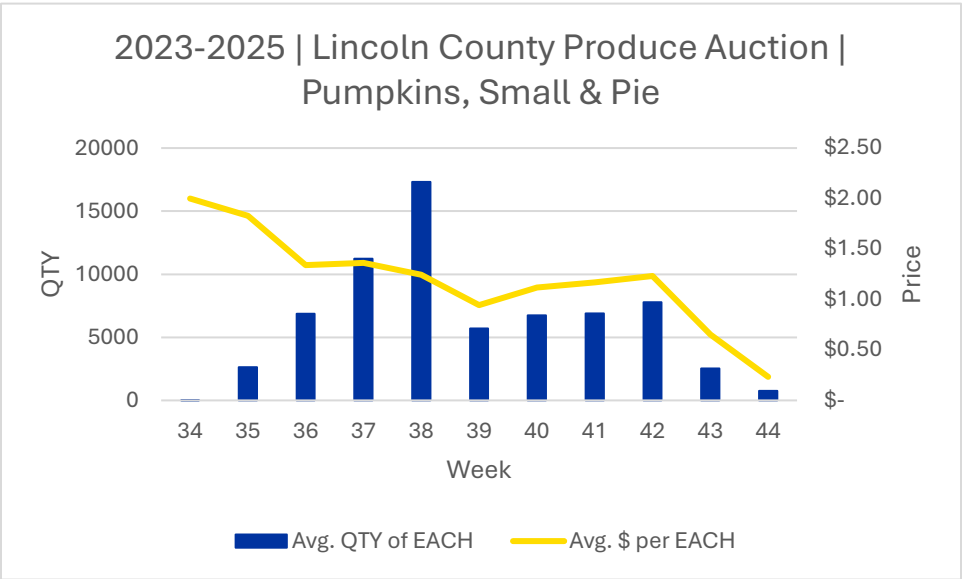
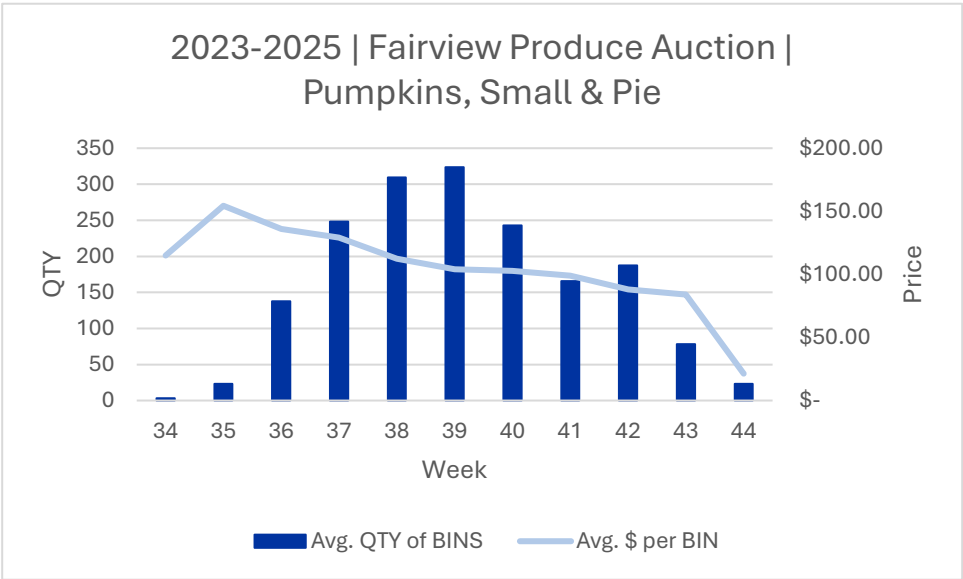
Per BIN:

2025: 2,000 | \$115.47 (bin)
2024: 3,222 | \$97.41 (bin)
2023: 3,151 | \$112.41 (bin)

Per PUMPKIN:

2025: 64,936 | \$2.65
2024: 53,182 | \$2.48
2023: 73,878 | \$2.79

PUMPKINS, Small & Pie



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: August – October.

Fairview reports pumpkins by the bin, while Lincoln County reports by the unit. Again, pumpkin season is relatively short, and we have a mostly bell-shaped supply trend. High prices are captured in the first few weeks of the season, and trend downwards as Halloween approaches. Peak supply is observed in weeks 37-39, while peak price is observed in weeks 34 and 35.

PACK SIZE: Pumpkins are packed in 24”-36” bins. Growers should fill the bin to a stackable level in increments of 5 and group pumpkins based on size.

Total QTY & Avg. \$

Per BIN:

2025: 1,720 | \$111.94

2024: 1,032 | \$102.13

2023: 1,221 | \$113.39

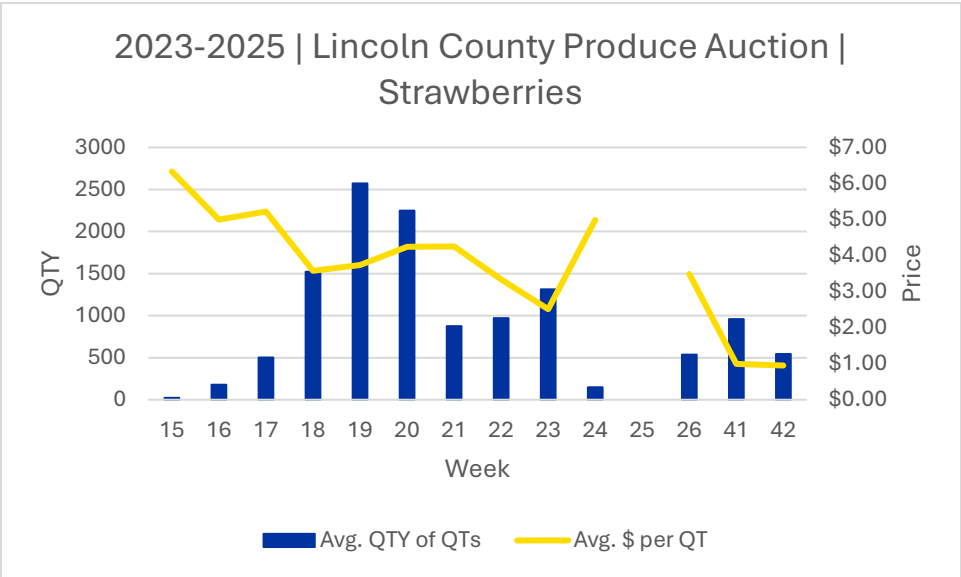
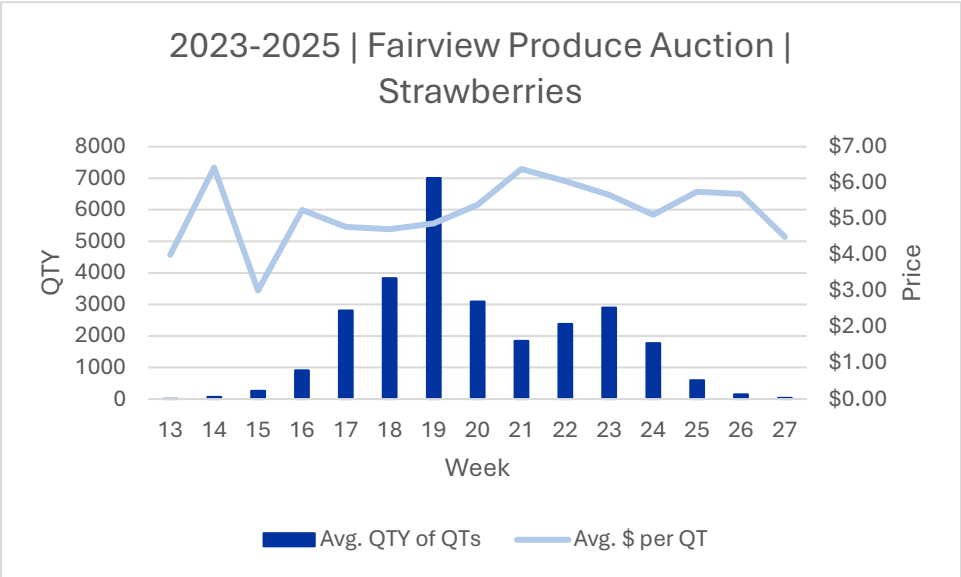
Per PUMPKIN:

2025: 86,873 | \$1.08

2024: 53,619 | \$1.31

2023: 60,537 | \$1.26

STRAWBERRIES



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: April – June.

Strawberries have a short season, with peak volume coming through the auction in mid-May. Prices remain strong in the peak volume weeks and as supply decreases. The price per quart is similar to (and in some weeks above) grocery store pricing, which may reflect an acknowledgment of the shorter growing season or the value of local strawberries. The 2025 quantity was lower than expected, most likely because of the *Neopestalotiopsis* fungal disease identified in Kentucky in the fall of 2024.

PACK SIZE: Strawberries should be packed in 8-quart berry flats. Variety should be specified on the tag.

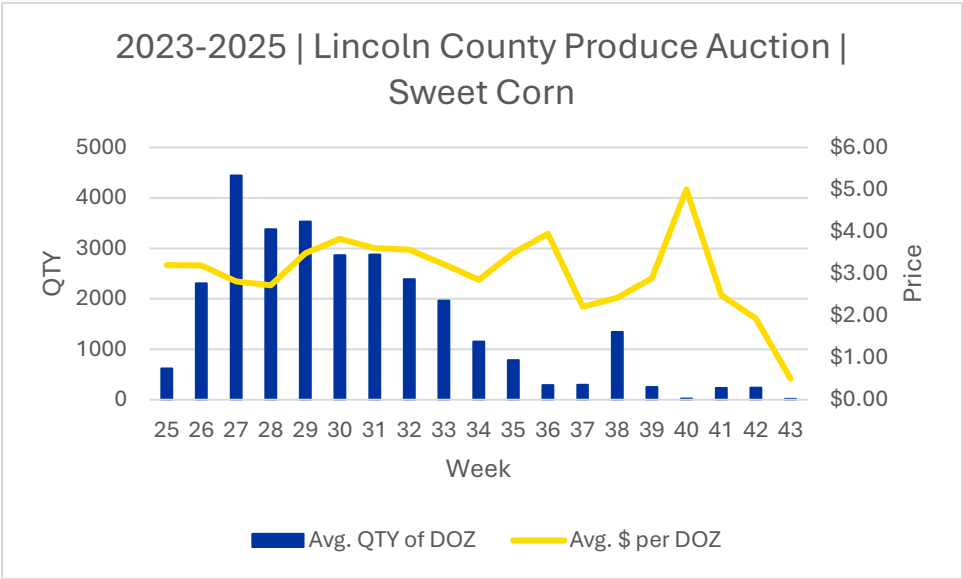
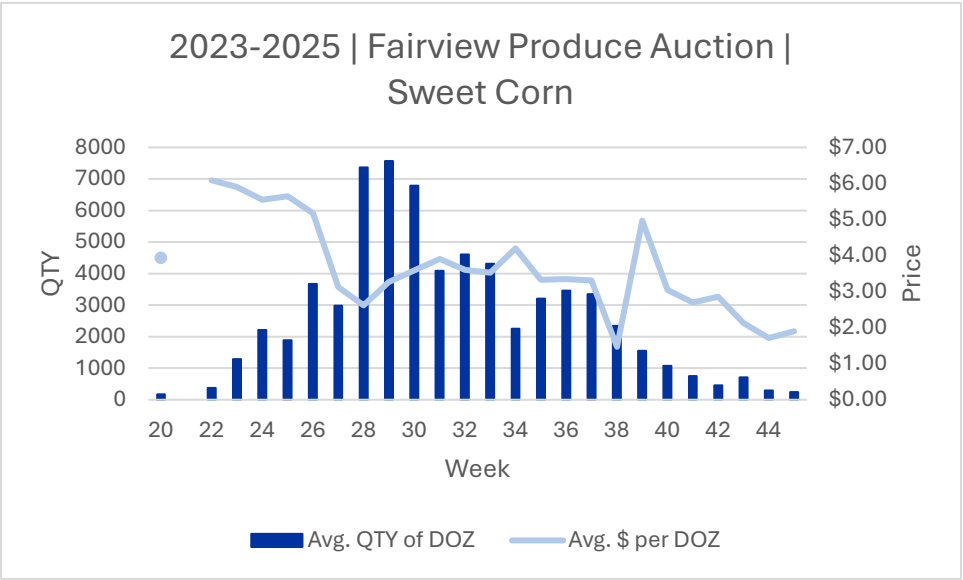
Total QTY & Avg. \$ (quart)

2025: 48,054 | \$4.19

2024: 54,029 | \$3.82

2023: 31,144 | \$5.32

SWEET CORN



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: June – October.

Sweet corn follows a bell-shaped quantity curve, more so for Fairview than for Lincoln County. Higher prices are observed in the first few weeks at the auction, and peak in Weeks 39 and 40. Price has an inverse relationship with quantity, which reflects the drop in price as quantity increases at the auctions. Price at Fairview stabilizes as supply tapers off later in the season.

PACK SIZE: Sweet corn should be packed in mesh bags with 5 dozen in each bag. These mesh bags should be packed in 24” or 26” bins with 50 dozen per bin. Variety should be specified on the tag.

Total QTY & Avg. \$ (dozen)

2025: 157,257 | \$3.55

2024: 92,046 | \$3.44

2023: 113,006 | \$2.83

TOMATOES, Grade #1 & #2

Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November/December. Fairview’s season for tomatoes is almost year-round.

The peak season is late July – August, with over \$1/lb. prices. High prices are seen for early-season tomatoes, but there is less of a clear premium for later tomatoes, but that varied by market. #1 and #2 grade tomatoes bring a higher \$/lb. compared to small and canner tomatoes, even in the saturated points of the season.

PACK SIZE: Tomatoes are packed in 20 lb. tomato boxes. The box must contain 20 lb. of net weight. Grade according to #1: nearly flawless & #2: slightly flawed but no open cracks.

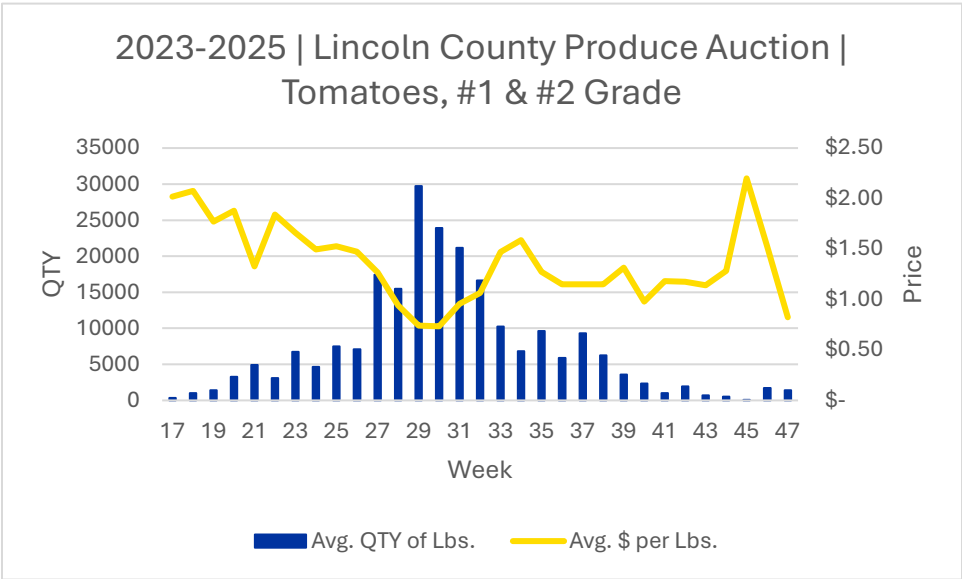
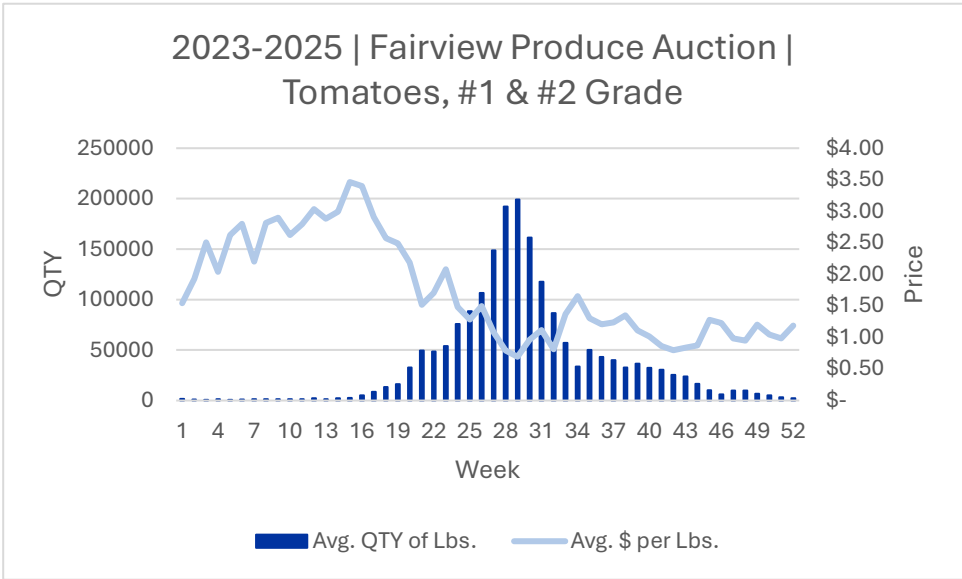
SIZING: Small: 2” – 2 ¾”; Medium: 2 ¾” – 3 ¼”; Large: 3 ¼” – 3 ¾”; Extra Large: 3 ¾” and larger.

Total QTY & Avg. \$ (lbs.)

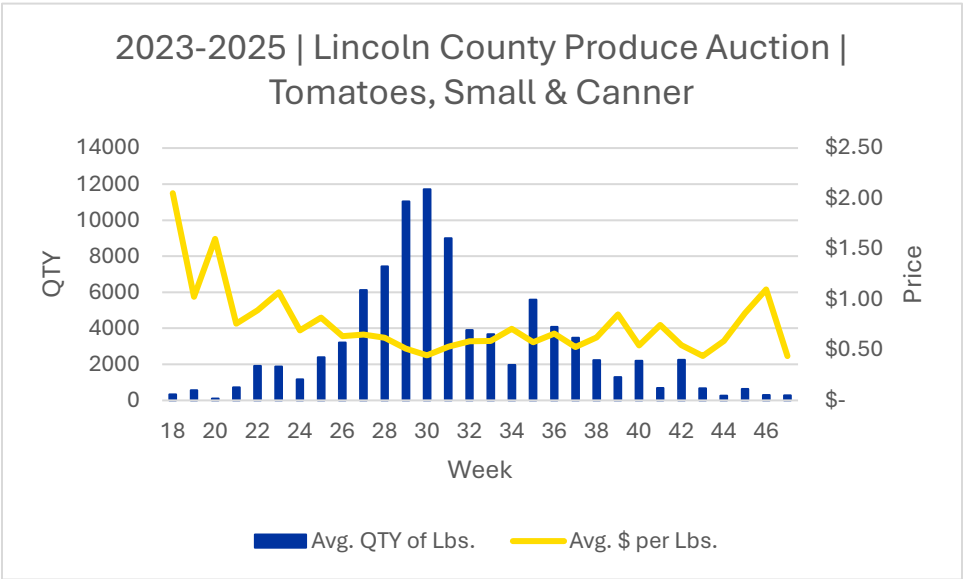
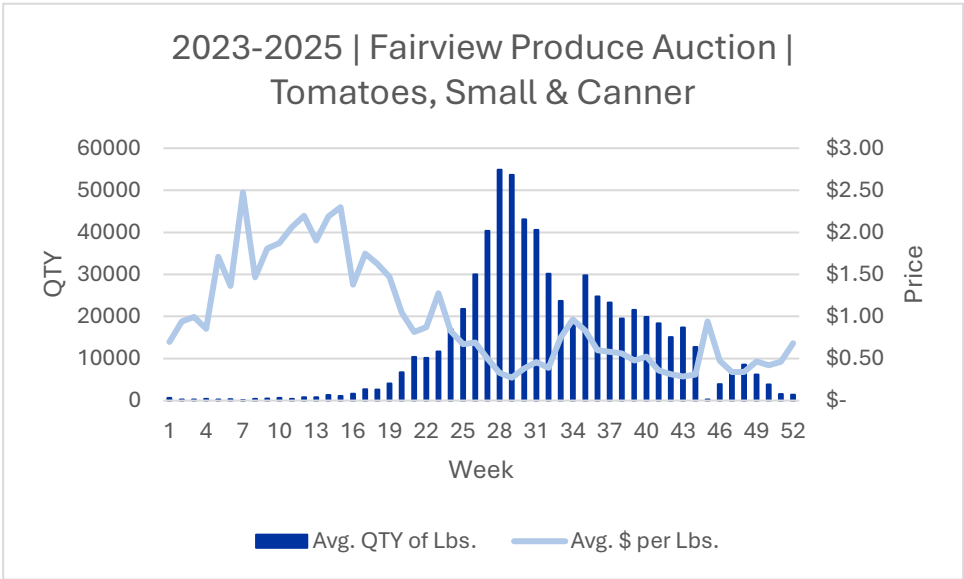
2025: 2,025,440 | \$1.77

2024: 2,158,540 | \$0.56

2023: 2,457,590 | \$0.94



TOMATOES, Small & Canner



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November. Fairview’s season for tomatoes is almost year-round.

Small and canner tomatoes follow a bell-shaped curve with peak supply in late July – August, accompanied by < \$0.70/lb. prices. High prices are seen for early-season product without much uptick as supply drops. Small and canner tomatoes do not bring as much \$/lb. as #1 and #2 grade tomatoes.

PACK SIZE: Tomatoes are packed in 20 lb. tomato boxes. The box must contain 20 lbs. of net weight. Grade according to Canner: cosmetic blemishes, but no spoilage or leaks.

SIZING: Refer to sizing for Grade #1 & #2 tomatoes.

Total QTY & Avg. \$ (lbs.)

2025: 772,550 | \$0.93

2024: 821,390 | \$0.55

2023: 666,260 | \$0.47

TOMATOES, Heirloom

Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: May – November. Fairview’s season for heirloom tomatoes is almost year-round.

Heirlooms follow a bell-shaped quantity curve with peak season in late July – August, accompanied by < \$1/lb. prices. High prices above \$3/lb. are seen for early-season product with some uptick as supply drops. Heirlooms are highly valued in direct-to-consumer markets, such as farmers’ markets, but the auction still serves as a valuable market for selling heirlooms.

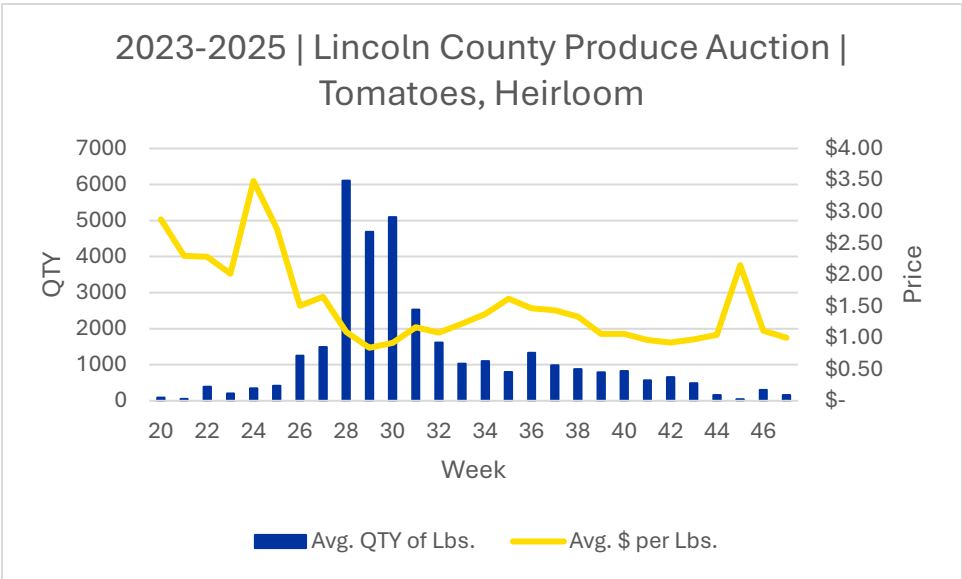
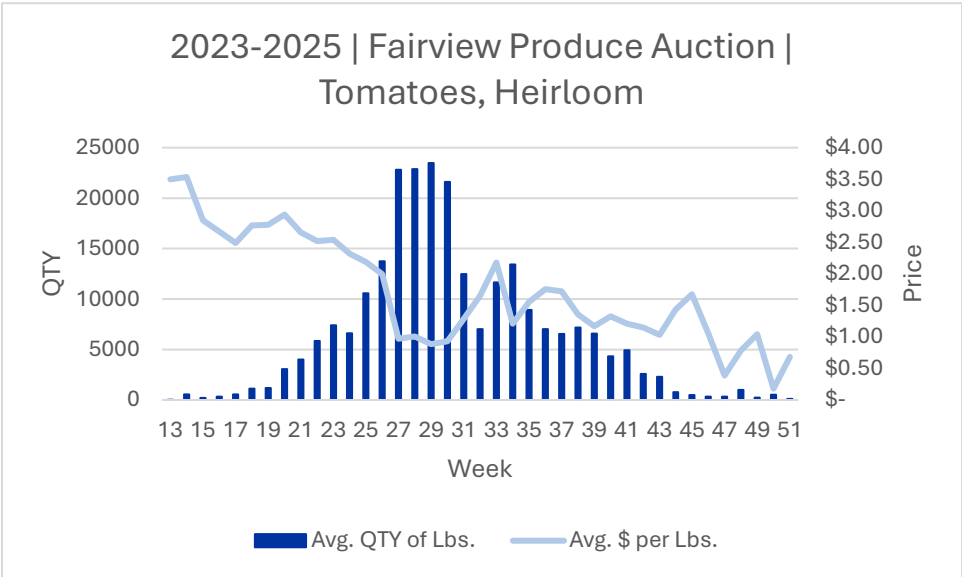
PACK SIZE: Heirloom tomatoes are packed in 10 lb. single-layer tomato boxes. Heirlooms are not graded for number or size.

Total QTY & Avg. \$ (lbs.)

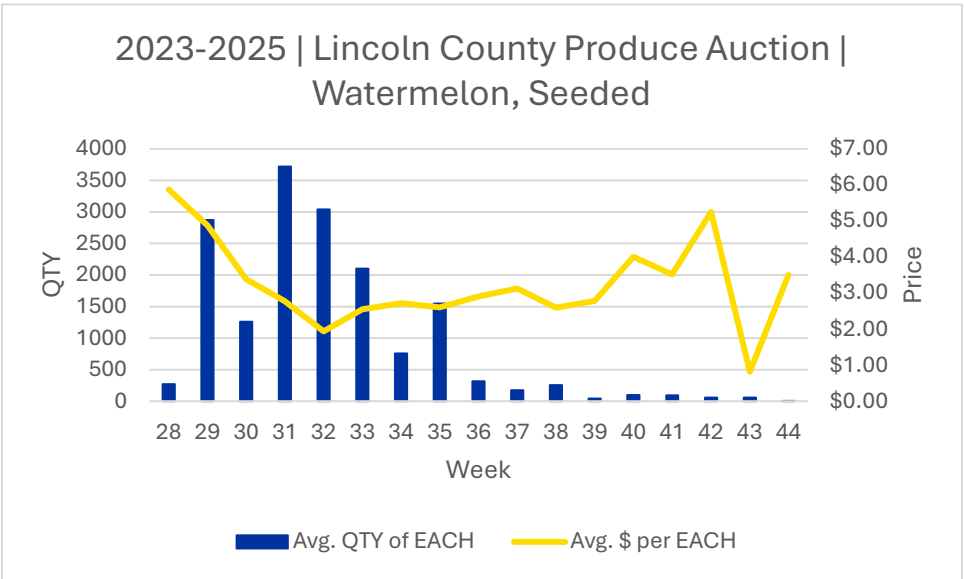
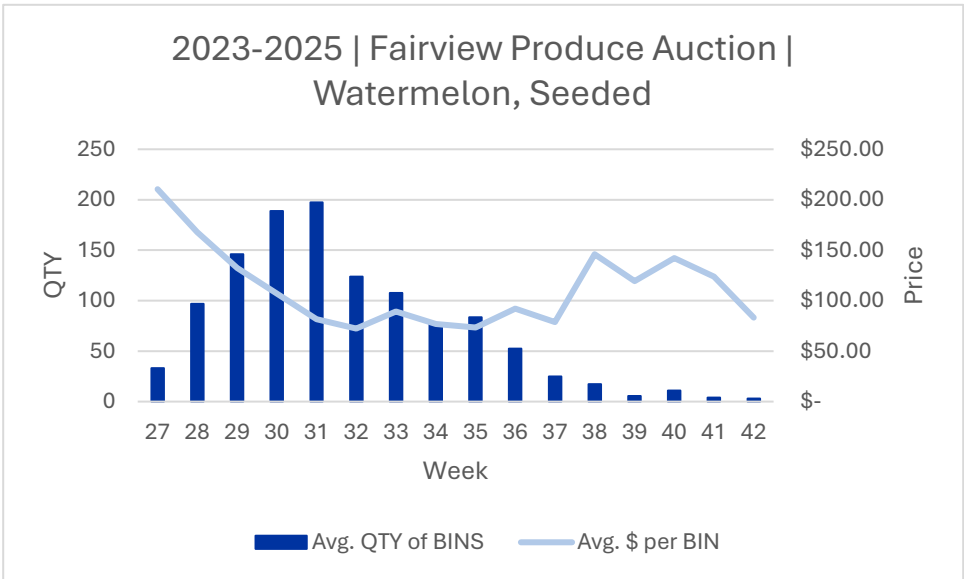
2025: 284,710 | \$1.72

2024: 269,230 | \$1.45

2023: 288,130 | \$1.09



WATERMELON, Seeded



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: July – October.

High price points can be observed at the beginning of the season. Price drops as supply comes through the auction.

PACK SIZE: Watermelons should be packed in 24” bins. Properly packed bins will be full or nearly full. Seeded varieties are sized in 28, 35, and 45 counts. Variety and type (seeded or seedless) should be specified on the tag, as they are reported separately.

Total QTY & Avg. \$

Per BIN:

2025: 1,728 | \$103.92

2024: 1,044 | \$94.41

2023: 873 | \$115.14

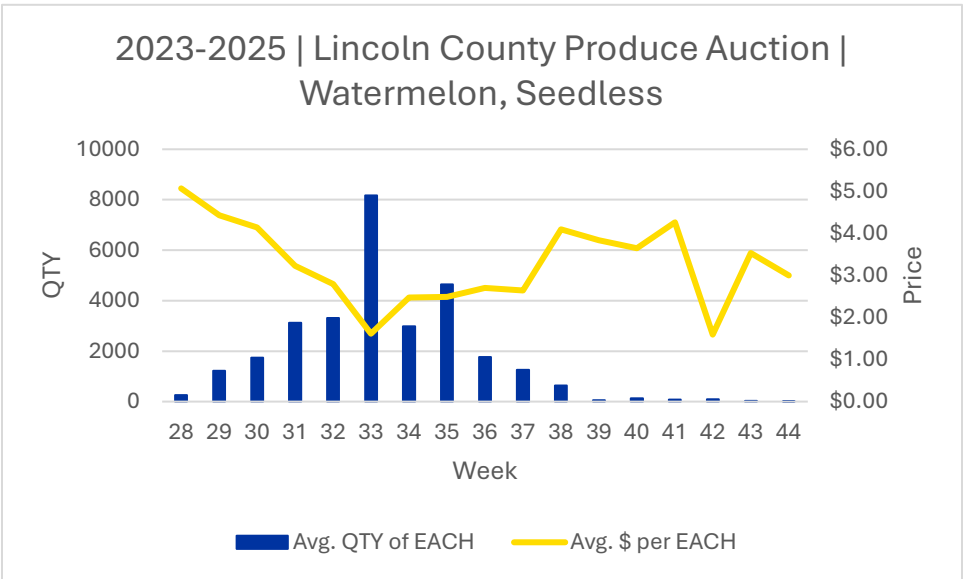
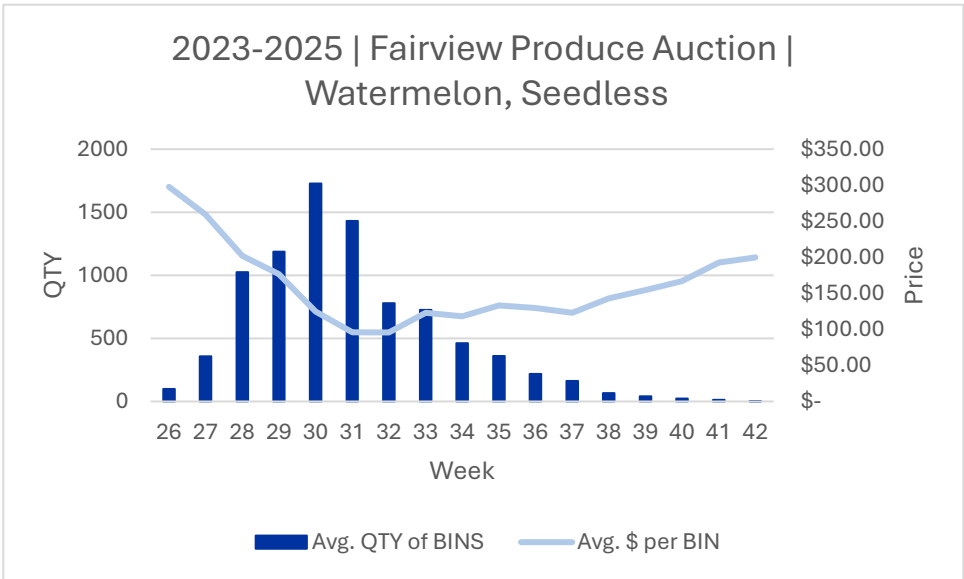
Per WATERMELON:

2025: 4,826 | \$3.05

2024: QTY N/A | \$3.74

2023: 16,067 | \$2.39

WATERMELON, Seedless



Notes & Observations

2023 – 2025 Weekly Average Prices & Quantities

SEASON LENGTH: July – October.

High price points can be observed at the beginning and tail-end of the season. There are price premiums for larger (25-50 ct.) bins vs. smaller (55-80 ct.) bins, but this is an average price and quantity for all sizes.

PACK SIZE: Watermelons should be packed in 24” bins. Properly packed bins will be full or nearly full. Seedless varieties are sized in 36, 45, and 60 counts. Variety and type (seeded or seedless) should be specified on the tag, as they are reported separately.

Total QTY & Avg. \$

Per BIN:

2025: 9,462 | \$156.54

2024: 7,870 | \$138.97

2023: 10,550 | \$140.61

Per WATERMELON:

2025: 23,364 | \$3.27

2024: QTY N/A | \$2.56

2023: 31,191 | \$2.68

THANKS FOR READING!

These averages are summaries of the auction price data collected by the UK Center for Crop Diversification. Additional crops, specific market prices, and alternative unit prices can be viewed in the weekly price reports on the [site](#). Since its start in 2004, the UK Center for Crop Diversification's price reporting system has changed and expanded to include Center partners working in Illinois, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Check out all the other specialty crop resources from the UK-CCD, including:

- [Regional Farmers Market & Produce Auction Price Reports](#)
- [Previous 3-Year Average Price Reports](#)
- [Produce Auction Marketing Channel](#)
- [Specialty Crop Budgets](#)
- [Tons of free publications, tools, & other resources](#)

We are always looking for feedback, so give us a shout on [Facebook](#) or by emailing savannah.columbia@uky.edu.

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IMAGE & GRAPHICS

Cover Photo: **Savannah Columbia**. *Tri-Color Peppers*. Photo taken at the Fairview Produce Auction.

Regional Produce Auction Map & Fairview & Lincoln County Produce Auctions on a Map of Kentucky:

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Columbia, S., Gardner, L., & Hinton, J. (2026). *Three-Year Average Prices & Quantities at Two Selected Kentucky Produce Auctions: 2023-2025*. CCD-FS-37. Lexington, KY: Center for Crop Diversification, University of Kentucky, Martin Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Available: <https://ccd.uky.edu/pricereports/averages>

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