

NEW YORK FRUIT QUARTERLY

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Editorial

Am I Growing Apples I Can Sell?

As everyone in the apple industry should be aware the market has and is changing rapidly. What was desired just a few years or in some cases months ago is no longer wanted. There are many reasons why these changes are taking place, some make sense, and some do not. However if anyone expects to make money in today's fruit industry they need to be aware of what is happening and try to adjust to the changes.

One of the first facts we have to adjust to is that not everything we are expected to do is fair. But as my mother use to tell me as I was growing up and complying that it wasn't fair, "who ever said life was fair", learn to deal with it. Whether we like it or not we have to learn to deal with it. Gone are the days that a grower can grow what he wants to, harvest the crop, expect somebody to market that crop and make money doing so, Also gone are the days when a apple handler can take what ever fruit is available, store and pack it how they feel it should be done and sell the product at a price both they and the grower can make money.

Today's customers expect any increasing amount of service from their suppliers; have ever increasing demands regarding the varieties they will handle and fruit size and quality they will buy. Are much more demanding as to the type of packaging and increasing less reasonable on lead time in placing orders.

What do we have to do to make money in today's market?

- Try to stay on top of what is happening.
- Be critical of what you are growing and selling.
- Look at how you can improve.
- Have a marketing plan that doesn't start the day it is time to pick or sell the apples.
- Know what you have to sell and where it is going.
- A grower has to maximize both yield and return to bushel just doing one or the other is not enough.
- Make changes, just because something work 5 years ago does not mean it will today, in fact it probably will not.

It never ceases to amaze me as to how many growers and sellers do not have any idea of what they have to pick, what the fruit looks like, and what they are going to do with it. With out this basic knowledge it is impossible to develop any type of marketing plan. With out a marketing plan it is impossible to sell fruit. The plan doesn't always work and normally needs adjusting but you have to have one to start with. Fruit that does not meet the needs and desires of the market place is better dealt at harvest time than after it has incurred additional cost. Growers are upset when fruit is rejected at harvest time but at least they have other alternatives then. When the problem is dealt with in after storage all anyone has done is spend more money on an unusable product.

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FRONT COVER: Twelve different varieties of summer raspberries show the range of colors available, everything from the black of 'Rubus Occidentalis' [black raspberry] to the yellow, amber and red of 'Rubus Idaeus' [red raspberry]. All are commercially available. CREDIT: J. Ogradnick/NYSAES/Cornell

BACK COVER: Top: fresh and processed products from elderberry and aronia include the elderberry flowers themselves, berries, syrup, tea, jam and juice. Plants are easy to grow, have few pests, and can be mechanically cultivated and harvested. Article on page 5. CREDIT: S. McKay/CCE/Cornell
Bottom: These four raspberries are in the study on antioxidant capacity and anticancer properties. Article on page 25. CREDIT: J. Ogradnick/NYSAES/Cornell

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