

A shipping case in point: the blueberries' trek

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The cost of getting produce and other food to Portland varies according to distance from the source, method of delivery and time of year. Growers are considering ways to lessen transportation costs. Here are three examples associated with the delivery of a pound of fresh blueberries to points of sale.

Air freight from Chile: From \$1.70 to \$2 a pound, based a 1,500-pound air freight container. That figure, however, does not include customs clearance or ground handling on arrival in the United States, which could add 20 cents a pound to the cost. What you pay: About \$18 a pound; the berries typically come in 4.4-ounce containers and sell for about \$5.

Motor carrier from points in the Willamette Valley: Two cents a pound, based on a 45,000-pound shipment via refrigerated trailer within 100 miles. Blueberries moving in major multiple-retailer channels typically would be delivered in large refrigerated trucks, usually originating from a local or regional distribution center or, infrequently, directly from the packing shed. What you pay: About \$3.50 a pound at local retailers,

Local farmers market direct delivery: Twenty-three cents a pound, based on a shipment originating 20 miles from Portland in a nonrefrigerated pickup truck with a 1,000-pound payload. What you pay: About \$2.50 to \$3 a pound at several farmers markets; about \$3.50 for organic.