

2014/15 Picking, Roadsiding and Hauling Charges for Florida Citrus

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A survey of Florida citrus harvesters was conducted in May/June 2015 to collect data on harvesting charges during the 2014/15 season. A total of twelve harvesters participated in the survey. The average and range of their responses was computed to obtain the estimates presented below. It is worth noting such estimates correspond to harvesting charges, not costs.

Harvesting charges are classified into picking, roadsiding and hauling. The picking charge is for removing the fruit from the tree. The roadsiding charge is for transporting the picked fruit to the flatbed truck or trailer. The roadsiding charge also includes the costs related to fruit pallet boxes or tubs, ladders and workers' transportation, payroll taxes, and insurance. The hauling charge is associated with transporting the fruit from the field to the packinghouse (in the case of fresh fruit) or the processing plant (in the case of fruit for juice).

The average and the range of picking, roadsiding, and hauling charges by variety and type of fruit (fresh vs. processed) are shown in Table 1. It is interesting to note that in all but two cases, picking and roadsiding average charges for fresh fruit are lower than those for processed fruit. A possible explanation for this seemingly counterintuitive finding could be the following. As the impact of Huanglongbing (HLB; citrus greening) increases, only the blocks with trees with lower infection levels yield fruit that qualifies for the fresh market. Since those trees are likely to have more fruit, the cost of harvesting such blocks is lower. Contrastingly, as the number of blocks with trees that have a higher infection level increases, and the volume of fruit they yield is lower, harvesting costs of such blocks increases.

This article summarizes the harvesting charges for citrus during the 2014/15 season. The Florida citrus industry currently faces the challenges imposed by HLB; decreasing yields and production, lower quality fruit, as well as increasing cost of production. On-tree prices are the basis for establishing the economic return to citrus growers. Therefore, the usefulness of these estimates resides in that they provide the basis for computing on-tree prices from delivered-in prices. In other words, the estimates herein document the harvesting charges and contribute to computing the change in growers' economic returns as the industry adapts to remain profitable.

Table 1. Estimated Picking, Roadsiding and Hauling Charges for Florida Citrus, 2014/15

	Fresh Fruit			Processed Fruit		
	Range			Range		
	min.	max.	Average	min.	max.	Average
<u>Picking Charges:</u>						
Early and Mid-season Oranges	0.90	1.10	1.03	0.90	1.31	1.07
Valencia Oranges	1.00	1.10	1.08	1.00	1.49	1.12
Valencia Oranges (after May 15)	1.00	1.25	1.14	1.00	1.64	1.22
Pink/Red Grapefruit	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.90	0.80
White/Marsh Grapefruit	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.90	0.81
Temples/Tangelos	1.25	1.50	1.45	1.25	1.50	1.45
Tangerines	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
<u>Roadsiding Charges:</u>						
Early and Mid-season Oranges	0.85	1.00	0.92	0.78	1.04	0.92
Valencia Oranges	0.87	1.00	0.93	0.78	1.12	0.95
Valencia Oranges (after May 15)	0.92	1.10	0.97	0.78	1.25	1.01
Pink/Red Grapefruit	0.84	1.04	0.94	0.70	0.90	0.81
White/Marsh Grapefruit	0.73	0.84	0.79	0.70	0.98	0.86
Temples/Tangelos	1.12	1.24	1.17	1.12	1.24	1.17
Tangerines	1.03	1.40	1.19	1.13	1.20	1.18
<u>Hauling Charges:</u>						
	Average All Varieties			Average All Varieties		
0-30 miles			0.429			0.370
31-50 miles			0.511			0.470
51-80 miles			0.590			0.599
81-100 miles			0.740			0.776
100+ miles			1.000			0.960

Source:

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