



Produce Trendspotting

of **PRODUCE** . . . for **PRODUCE** . . . by **PRODUCE**

Labour Day's behind us, time to focus on year-end goals

Ever since I saw Vito give Carmella the gift of a single pear in *The Godfather Part II*, I knew the fruit had a certain significance that outstripped its sales. For that reason, we put **Produce Moneyball** on the case to dig deeper into the historical pear market while also using the power of prediction to foretell the short-term future of pears. Next, we handed the ball off to **The Produce Trendsetter**. While the movie suggests mobsters are amongst the customer group for pears, we wanted to go a bit deeper into the seedy underbelly of pear consumers to learn just who is it buying them. And of course, **What's in Store** makes another appearance to review the pear marketplace..

All the while I was dreaming of pears, something hit me. Labour day is now behind us. So, what's next? Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's. Really? Just like that and the year is in the stretch run? Time to take stock and determine if you will hit your year end goals. If you are at all like me you might be saying to yourself, ***"I've barely had a chance to fully understand my 2025 goals."*** And now, not only do we have to face the music of the goals we've already set we also have to face the daunting task of imagining our goals for 2026. Phew! That's a lot to consider and I've barely had time to take my bathing suit off after what seemed like a summer-long heat wave.

It's time to have your say, I want to hear what you think. With barely more than one-quarter until the end of the year, where do you stand on your business goals? If you set sales targets, will you hit them? If you wanted to snag a new strategic customer, did you sign them up? If profitability was your 2024 Achilles heal and 2025 was meant to correct it, will profitability issues be in the rear-view mirror when Baby New Year makes his presence known? Answer this month's poll question, with less than four months before the end of the year, have your say on progress. Just a reminder that the answers are completely anonymous, so I encourage you to participate in the survey as it gives us all an inside peak into the psyche of the industry.

Execulytics Monthly Poll

Click on the image below to answer this month's poll question. Answers are anonymous and the results insightful.

Results will be published in next month's Produce Trendspotting.

With Labour Day in the rear view mirror, year-end goals start to come into focus. Are you on track to meet most of your goals?

SELECT ONE

☐ Yes

☐ No

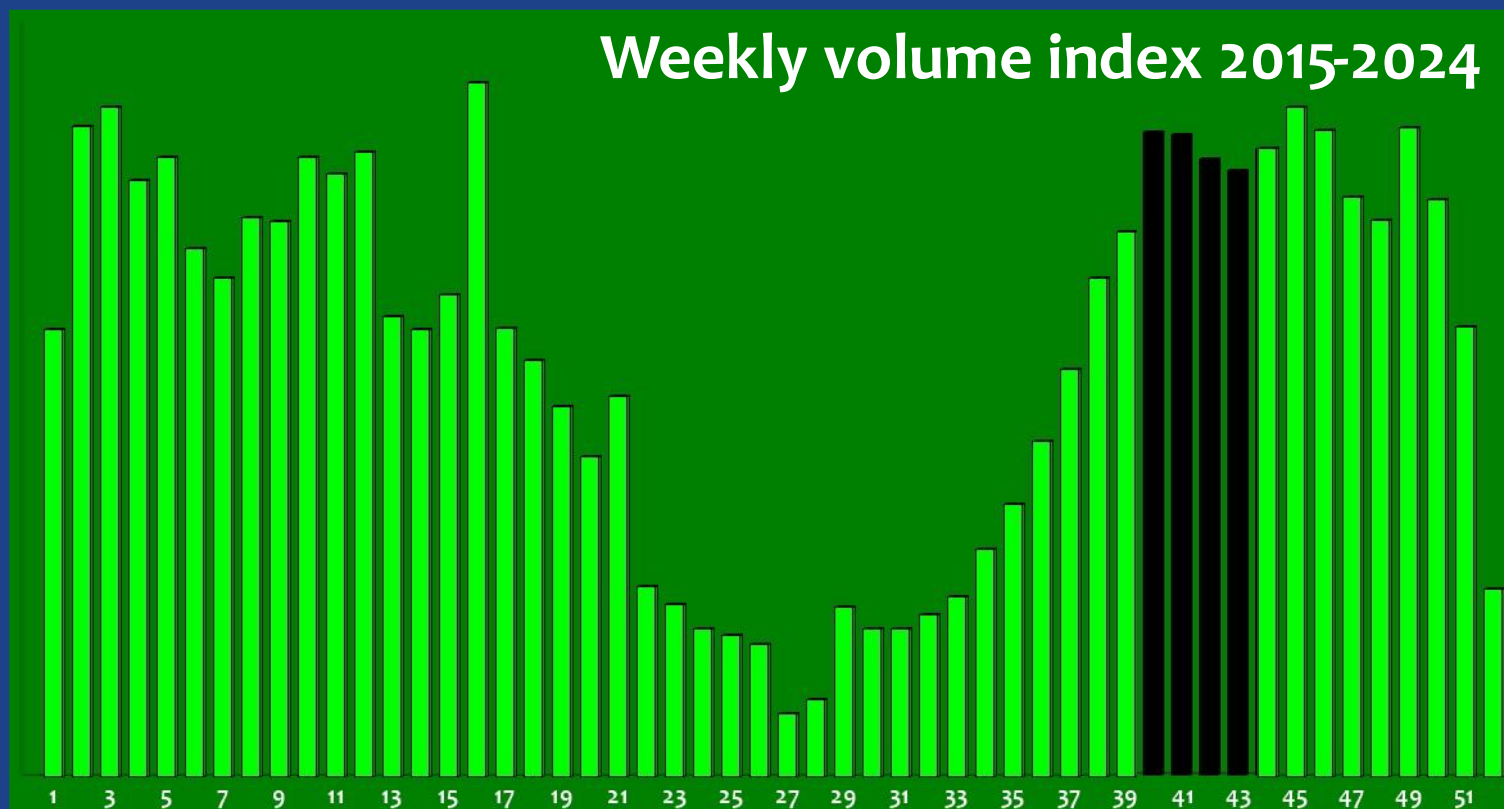
☐ Still too early to tell



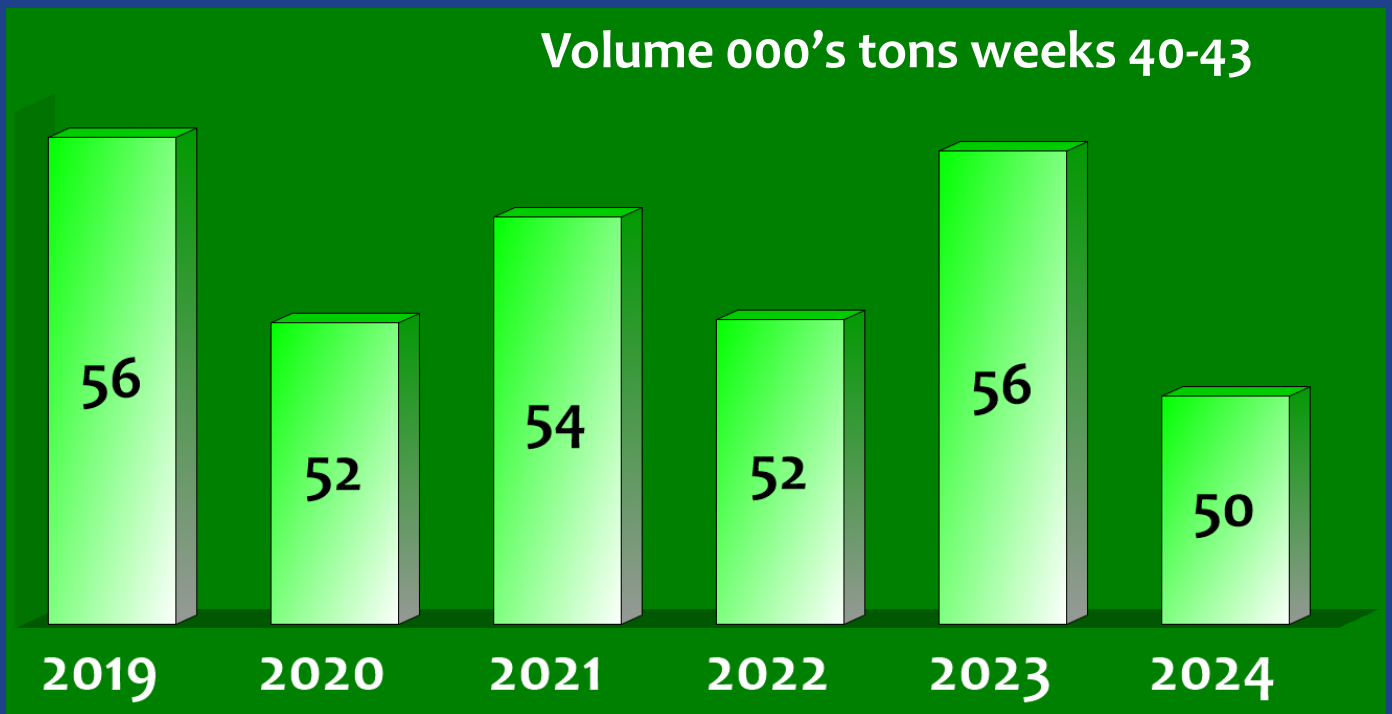
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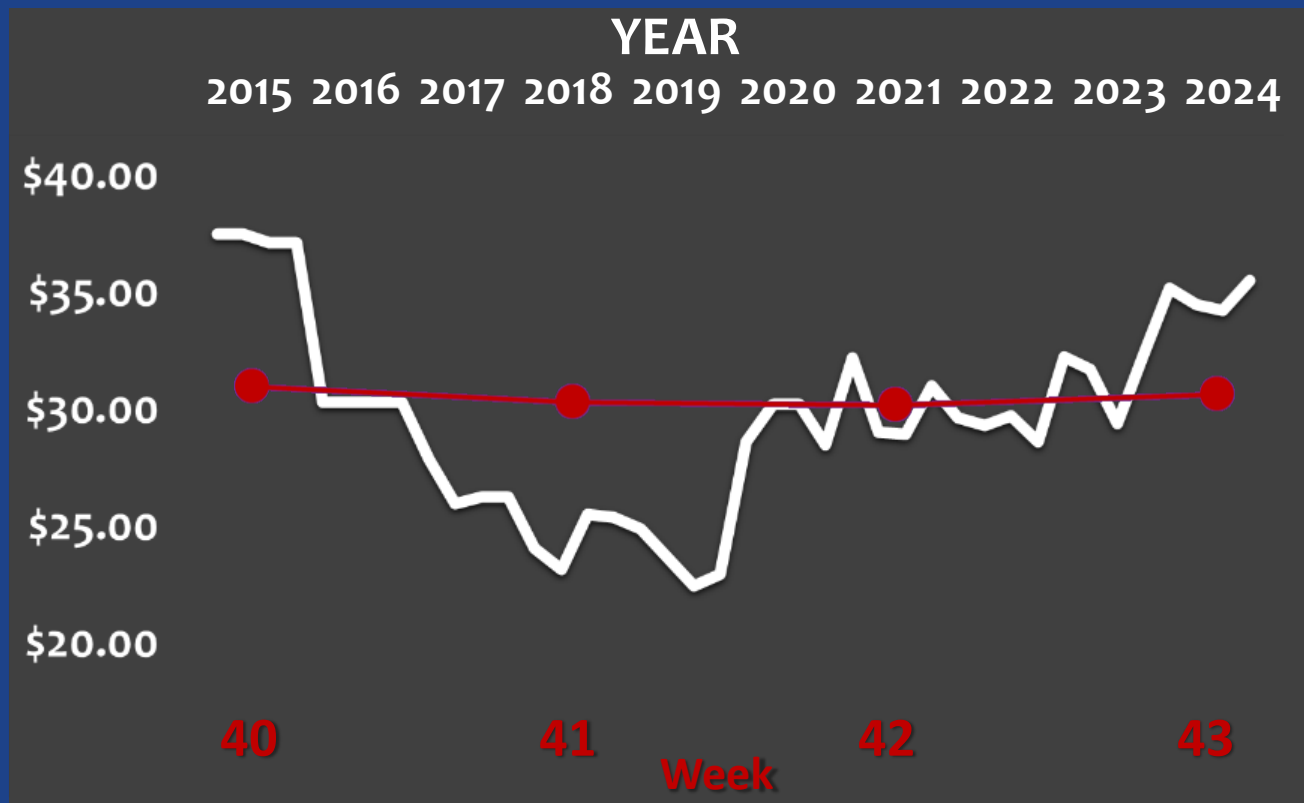
Last month we talked about apples, this month pears takes a spin on the **Produce Moneyball** express. When we talked about apples, we took a close look at the prep month for the big show. The period of time when you are putting the pieces in place to make a big splash in the months to come. While we could have done that with pears as well, instead we chose to dive right into the show. You can see from the chart below that September, the month we are currently in experiences a significant build up with week after week increasing volume in leaps and bounds, until you get to our focus period. The month of October represents the start of peak season for pears. It's a peak that lasts for arguably five months with the kickoff just in time for Canadian Thanksgiving.



In the produce world, Canadian Thanksgiving is more than just a holiday, it's a launch pad. It's when new growing regions step into the spotlight, the weather makes its seasonal shift, and shoppers start leaning into that festive mindset. And right on cue, pears hit their stride. Looking at the chart on the next page, detailing October shipment data, volumes have held steady over the last several years, though with some bumps along the way. Last year broke the pattern, coming in about 7% below the five-year average. Why the dip? Ask around and you'll hear plenty of theories. **Produce Moneyball** prefers to dig into the numbers and start with one simple, relentless question: Why?



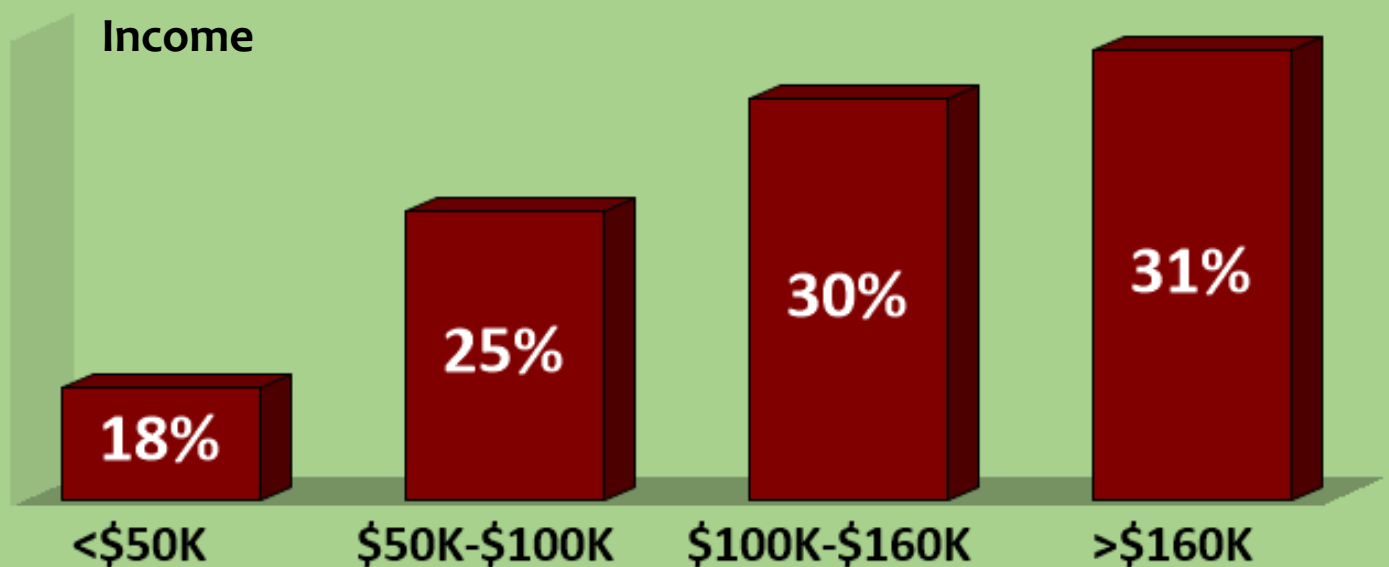
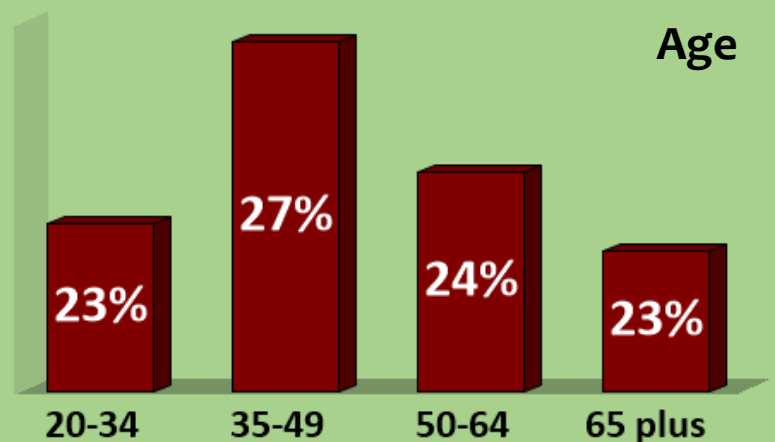
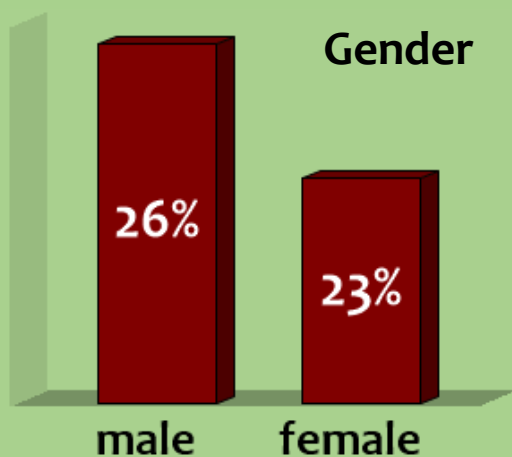
At the risk of oversimplifying, the “why” behind most market shifts comes down to one of two forces: supply or demand. Economics students know the drill, draw the curves, and the story usually tells itself. Take 90-count Bartlett pears, the October cost curve is displayed below. From 2016 to 2020, FOB costs were in near freefall, until 2020, when they leveled out around \$30. Oddly enough, in a year defined by instability, pear pricing found a four-year stretch of calm, and volumes held steady alongside it. Then came 2024: costs climbed, and volumes fell about 7% below the five-year average. So, what happened? **Produce Moneyball's** answer: supplies tightened, pushing prices higher. The forecast? A likely return to that \$30 FOB sweet spot this October.



The Produce Trendsetter



Who's into pears? Well, about a quarter of us if you can believe the twelve thousand or so grocery shoppers who answered our polls last year. But within the twenty-five percent of the twelve-thousand, a distinct group emerges. It is rare that we find men out-indexing women but that is precisely what we find with pears. It's also rare to find men aged 35-49 being the prolific spenders in our focus fruit or vegetable category. Again, that is what we find with pears. And income also plays a more significant role than what we have seen in the past. Those in the highest income bracket are nearly three-quarters more likely to put pears in their basket than those in the lowest income bracket.



There you have it; the core pear consumer: a 35–49-year-old man with a household income north of \$160,000. Know someone like that? Ask if pears make it into his shopping basket. If not, we can help you find him. Start your search in Quebec, where residents of *La Belle Province* are far more likely to buy pears than the national average. Ontario is another stronghold, Ontarians also over-index on pear purchases. The Atlantic provinces, on the other hand, show the weakest appetite for pears. Now, look in discount grocery stores because this is their preferred shopping venue. The portrait is taking shape: a middle-aged, high-earning man, careful with his money, living in Quebec or Ontario. And his taste extends beyond pears, peek into his cart and you'll probably spot oranges, peaches, and pineapples riding alongside. Oh and he also has a soft spot for organics and greenhouse produce, go figure.

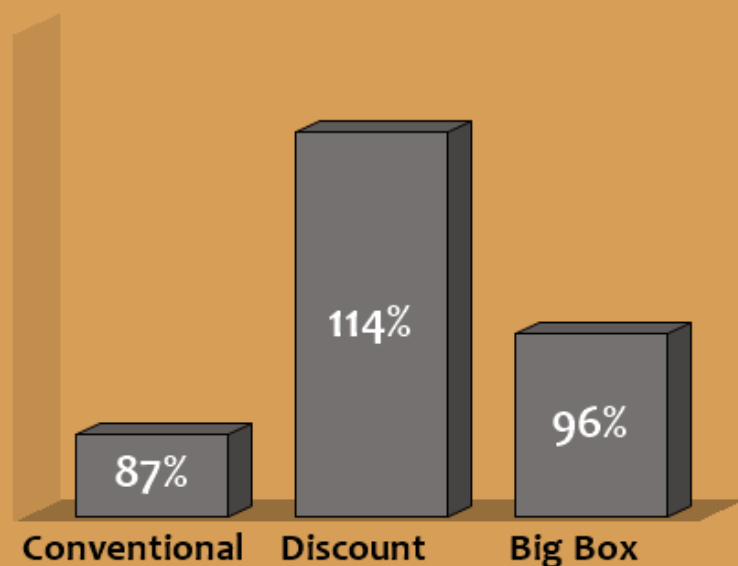
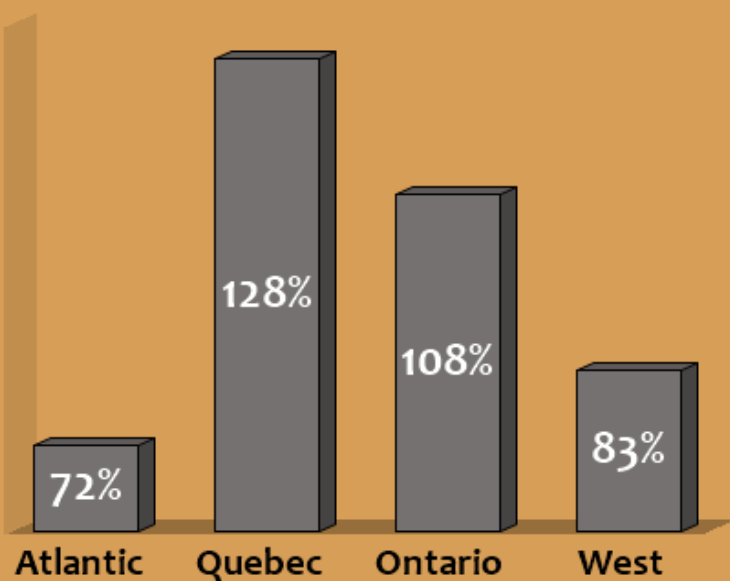


BOTTOM LINE: One quarter of Canadians are consuming pears. The core consumer can best be described as a middle-aged male coming from a higher income household. They reside in Quebec and to a lesser degree Ontario. They have a fondness for organics and are more likely to buy greenhouse produce. In addition to pears; pineapples, peaches and oranges can also be found on their fruit platters when entertaining.



What's In Store?

"A pear ripens in silence, yet its sweetness is known to all." Words to live by, especially if you're one of the many devoted pear lovers. Thanks to **The Produce Trendsetter**, we now know exactly who that sweetness is most often known to: the 35–49-year-old man with a penchant for pears. That insight gave us a clear picture of the consumer. But it was **Produce Moneyball** that filled in the other half of the story, the quiet weeks when pears are ripening and market forces are shifting. This October, expect 90-count Bartlett pears to land around \$30 FOB, following a short-lived cost spike. Armed with this knowledge, we step into **What's In Store**; your front-row seat to the pear category *"in theatre"*, meaning right on the shop floor. Whether you're here for the commercial strategy or just the inside scoop on where to place your bets for optimal pear performance, you're in the right place. Keep reading.



We heard that Quebec was the undisputed leader for pear penetration, but who knew that it was a runaway against all other regions. Okay fine, we knew, we just held back until now. We can't give it all up right from the start. But a 128% index really shows Quebec's pear prowess. Ontario does just fine too, as you can see above, Ontario also over-indexes while the West and Atlantic regions have some catching up to do. Likewise, discount grocery stores punch far above their weight. This is a bit of an interesting discovery. Pears appeal to a higher income customer and they have a hint of specialty, particularly when compared to apples (remember an apple a day?). Despite these high-end credentials, customers are more inclined to buy them at a discount store. I suppose that says something about the discount store's ability to bring life's simple luxuries to a larger customer base. On the other hand, it could just be because Quebec has a high penetration of discount stores in the province.

Whether it's because the pear consuming public lives where discount stores dominate or because discount stores know how to bring premium foods to a larger audience, the fact remains. Discount stores sell more pears per shopper than the other formats.

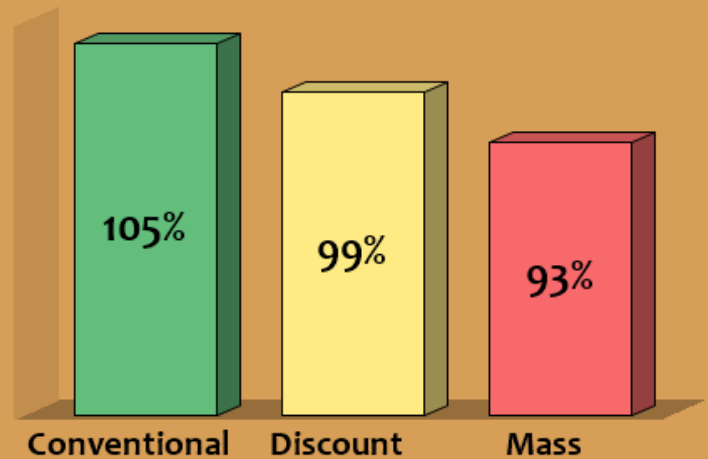
That is undoubtedly interesting information, but interesting is a luxury to some people. These people want pertinent, not just interesting. These people want to know how much and we have just the right the tool to supply that answer. Enter the **Volume Whisperer**. Remember this system uses numerous data sets, crunching literally millions of numbers to arrive at a required quantity of truckloads required in each and every region in Canada to fulfill retail demand.



For October, according to the **Volume Whisperer**:

- Ontario requires 159 truckloads
- Quebec, punching far above its weight requires 108 loads
- The West needs a further 103 truckloads
- Atlantic Canada puts their hand in the pot for 17 loads

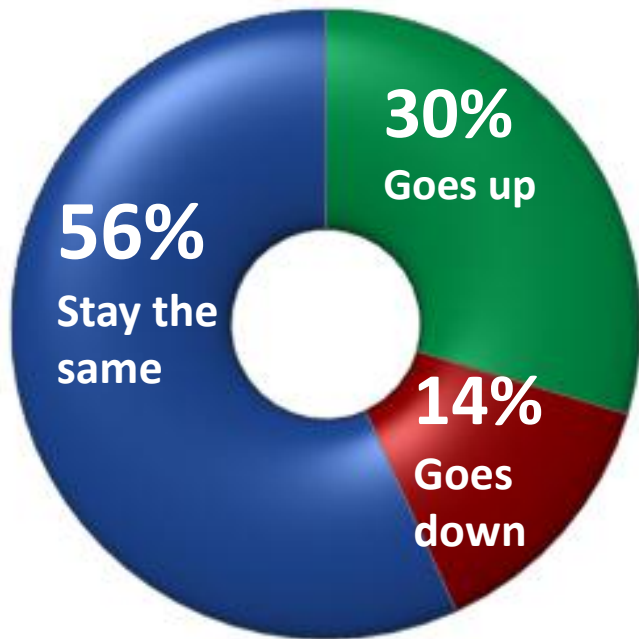
Just a little under 100 loads per week to satisfy Canadian demand in the all-important month of October.



← **More Expensive Less** →

Quebec has a significant household penetration advantage you say? Well, okay **The Produce Trendsetter** told us that and it was confirmed on the previous page, indexing at 128%. Do you remember what else **The Produce Trendsetter** told us? That the Atlantic provinces lagged the rest of the country for household pear penetration and again the chart on the previous page confirmed that as well with a 72% index. I wonder if the country's hottest and coldest retail prices have anything to do with that? Pretty good chance of that. As for format pricing advantages? Mass edges out discount, while conventional has the highest prices, as one might expect.

Last Month's Poll Question



As retail focus moves away from Summer BBQ/Local Produce and into Back to School/Fall Harvest? How does this impact the volume of fruits and vegetables in your business?

Check back to this spot every month to see the results of last month's Produce Trendspotting survey. Be sure to answer this month's question, if you haven't already, follow this link:

PRODUCE TRENDSPOTTING POLL

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Sincerely,

Execulytics Managing Partner

Mike Mauti

