

A kilogram of carrots costs over a dollar more than last year

MARION VAN DIJK/FAIRFAX NZ

Carrots have followed apples to record prices.

Carrot prices are at an all-time high of \$3.53 a kilogram, up more than 50 per cent in February from a year earlier, according to a Statistics New Zealand.

Ohakune carrot grower Sue Deadman said she has not seen a year with this small of a yield in a long time.

Deadman said it was chaos trying to work around the weather this year, crop yield was lower, and the amount of carrots not fit to be sold on supermarket shelves was higher.

"We sometimes get patches where it's quite damp ... but this year it was consistently wet and you might have got the odd fine day in between."

READ MORE

* **Record high apple prices with supplies short, but more are on the way**

* **North Island carrot supply - and jobs - at risk after dry months**

Deadman said carrot growers plant in seven to 10 day cycles, and there were times some growers couldn't get their crops planted because the ground was too wet.

The carrot harvest started in late January and goes until about October in Ohakune, but one or two growers in the region have yet to start harvesting, Deadman said.

She said at this stage it was a bit early to be predicting what the yield and prices for the rest of the season would look like.

Lower Hutt fresh produce wholesaler Ajay Jina said, "Once Ohakune is at full production, prices will ease back again."

In the meantime, most carrots on the market have been coming from Pukekohe which have seen a period of drought followed by flooding.

Jina said the high price was a product of sporadic weather.

"It's always tough when the weather is what it is, but we'll get through it."

He said he expects prices to drop in two to three weeks as the harvest hits peak season, which was late this year, as it was for apples earlier in the year.

The carrot price jump follows January's record apple prices, which have fallen 13 per cent from January to February as the fruit hit peak harvest.

But apple prices compared to February last year are still up 32 per cent.

Food prices overall increased 2.2 per cent in the year to February.

Consumer price manager Matthew Haigh said the 2.2 per cent increase was the largest annual increase since December 2011.

This jump was led by higher prices for fruit, vegetables and dairy products.

Fruit and vegetables were up 7.7 per cent and grocery food was up 2.3 per cent.

The high prices of vegetables like carrots, kumara, and tomatoes drove the increase in vegetable prices, which are up 12 per cent.

The average price for a 250 gram punnet of strawberries was \$7.05 in February, up from \$5.03 in January and \$5.64 in February 2016.

But meat, poultry, and fish prices, which were down 2 per cent from a year ago

Butter prices were up 33 per cent compared with February 2016 and up 13 per cent since January.

Haigh said: "500g of the cheapest available butter cost on average \$4.58 this month, compared with \$4.06 last month and \$3.45 a year ago".

- Stuff

Ad Feedback

