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## **Brussels sprouts supplies tight; rising market follows**

May 30, 2017

Like with many western vegetables items, spring rain in California hampered Brussels sprouts planting activity and has led to a gap in supplies as we head into June.

Katie Harreld, sales manager and Brussels sprouts commodity manager for Ippolito International LP in Salinas, CA, said supplies have been very tight since mid-May and she sees no let up until at least mid-June. She noted that the typical 25-pound bulk pack was trading in the \$35-\$40 range on May 27.

Harreld has been selling Brussels sprouts almost since she joined Ippolito a dozen years ago, as the company specializes in the product and is one of the nation's largest growers of the trendy item. She said Brussels sprouts have come a long way in that time period as retail sales have been fueled by increased usage at foodservice. More and more commercial chefs are featuring Brussels sprouts creating more demand by the home chef.

That demand has led to periods of tight markets. "We have seen these prices before," she said on Friday, May 26. "Brussels sprouts have become very popular so in times of short supply we have experienced high markets. Sometimes it's very difficult to keep up with demand. I think this will last at least two or three more weeks."

She explained that it takes longer to grow Brussels sprouts than many of the other vegetables so a weather-related planting hiatus typically takes longer than other crops to work through at harvest time. But Harreld said the popularity has also led to many more acres being planted and more growers getting into the deal. Brussels sprouts have rightly taken their spot alongside some of the industry's biggest vegetable hitters.

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