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Market Minute: Erratic weather could challenge berry market

By

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Did you ever hear of a cloudberry? It's among the rarest berries in the world. I learned all about this unusual berry from a friend in Norway. This rare golden-colored berry only grows in the high cloud altitudes of the Northern Hemisphere close to the Arctic Circle. Thus, it was named "cloudberry."



Besides the cloudberry, there are over 400 varieties of berries. But four of the most popular varieties are regularly promoted in ads by retailers — strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. That's why most retailers prefer to promote them in weekly ads.

It took years — until the late 1970s and early 1980s — to really start handling raspberries and blackberries in the produce departments. That's because strawberries and blueberries were the most dominant at the time. Retailers were wary of handling raspberries and blackberries because of the sensitivity of low shelf life and shrink loss. However, times have changed in growing and packaging methods where both varieties are now commonly found in every produce department.

Strawberries out of California and Mexico are gradually finishing up. Markets have been steady with a fairly good demand, but supplies will become lighter into December until gradually transitioning to the Florida crop.

Blueberries are arriving from Peru on a steady market and fairly good demand. There is a lighter supply out of Mexico with a good demand and steady market.

Raspberries are steadily coming from Mexico with good quality. Markets are showing some rise.

Blackberries are starting to limit in volume due to past weather conditions.

The main concern is future unknown weather that could influence the markets.

For further information, consult your berry suppliers and make plans early for promoting berries during the upcoming holidays.

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