

Economic Considerations of Producing the Primocane-Fruiting Blackberry Cultivar Prime-Jan[®] in Northwest Arkansas

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Researchers have demonstrated that pruning and tipping techniques could increase yield and extend the fruiting season of primocane-fruiting blackberries. In this study, we estimated the probability of covering the total cost of production (break-even) for the blackberry primocane-fruiting cultivar Prime-Jan[®] under open field and high-tunnel conditions. We accomplished this objective by simulating present value outcomes for each production system and by using sensitivity analyses to estimate the effect of a specified change in yield, price or a combination of both.

Overall, break-even probabilities differed depending on the different percentage of yield sold, the percentage of the retail price received by the producer and the production system analyzed. However, results show that Prime-Jan[®] yields were higher for the open field system during the first two years of production.

Although the high-tunnel system produced a higher yield in the third year, our results did not show that high-tunnels had any considerable out of season benefit. Production year three increase in Prime-Jan[®] yield was not attributed to season extension, but rather to crop protection. It was determined that the increased yield due to weather protection may not offset the additional costs of constructing and managing high-tunnels. Our results suggest that more work needs to be done evaluating different primocane-fruiting blackberry cultivars and their adaptation to specific locations.

Producers looking to improve their probabilities of covering the high tunnel total costs of production can look for additional uses for the high-tunnel structure or select moveable high-tunnels that are over berries only during the harvest season and are over another crop throughout the summer.