

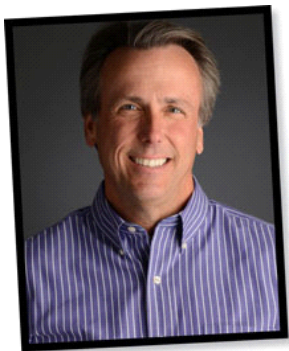
GROWERTALKS

Acres & Acres

7/1/2023

Pandemic Not Required

Chris Beytes



CHRIS BEYTES

If Spring '23 didn't make you feel good (with local exceptions, like Houston and parts of Colorado), then there is no pleasing you. Even Bill Swanekamp of Kube-Pak in New Jersey, a man who deals only in facts and does not give out superlatives lightly, said 2023 "will turn out to be number one in the record books." Bill's record books are extremely accurate, so if he says Spring 2023 was the best ever for Kube-Pak, then it was.

I'm basing this column on my annual Spring Season Sales Summary, in which I asked readers of my newsletter, Acres Online, to rate the previous week/weekend's sales on a scale of 1 to 10. Scores can be based on hard data or pure gut. It's not scientific (TAMU ag economist Dr. Charlie Hall calls it "an amalgamation of opinion"), but it's consistent: I tend to get scores from the same 75 to 100 respondents each week, year after year.

I run the survey from the first weekend of April through the last weekend of June; as I write this, we still have two weekends to go, so my full-season data isn't quite complete. But based on what you've told me thus far, Spring 2023 has been, as Bill said, one for the record books. Best ever for some of you, or in the top two or three seasons ever. Only the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 were better.

Rather than make you wait until August for the details, I can tell you that, through the second week of June, the season-long score is 7.6 in the U.S. and 7.6 in Canada. Both scores are a bit above the 11-year average of 7.2 (coincidentally, the average for both countries). In fact, for the U.S., this is the best score of all years other than the pandemic seasons of 2020 and 2021. Same for Canada; they also scored 7.6 in 2016.

The 2023 season got off to a slow start. April scored 6.7 in the U.S. and 6.7 in Canada—slightly below average (6.9) in the U.S., but decently above average (6.0) in Canada. The thing about April is that it's not generally your big profit-making month. Of course, it may be for some of you down south or out west; in that case, I can only hope your results were higher!

May turned the season around for many of you, scoring a whopping 8.2 in the U.S. and 8.8 in Canada! The average? 7.9 and 8.0. How good was May, historically speaking? In the U.S., only 2020 (9.1) and 2021 (8.8) beat it. In Canada, the same—2020 (9.0) and 2021 (9.2). If you celebrated May (or were too exhausted to celebrate), there's good reason!

June, like April, is not a big profit month, but it is a gravy month—for many of you, any sales you get after Memorial Day are a welcome bonus and go straight to the bottom line. Keeping in mind that these numbers are for only two weeks of June—and that it included some low scores due to the fires and smoke in Canada and the U.S. Northeast—it again scored above average in the U.S. at 7.9 (average is 7.2). Canada, at 7.4, is slightly below average (7.6).

Granted, two more weeks of June scores could raise or lower those results slightly, but it shouldn't make a big difference; plus, few of you count on June for your big profits anyway.

The main point here is how the overall season turned out, and based on your scores, 2023 (7.6/7.6) will be the third-best season since I started trying to keep score. Only the pandemic years of 2020 (8.1/8.2) and 2021 (8.2/8.1) beat it. In fact, no other season comes close!

Which tells me one wonderful thing: We don't have to suffer through a pandemic to have record sales! **GT**

Here's the historical data:

	US	CAN
2023	7.6	7.6
2022	7.3	6.6
2021	8.2	8.1
2020	8.1	8.2
2019	7.3	7.2
2018	6.7	6.7
2017	7.0	6.9
2016	7.1	7.6
2015	6.9	6.6
2014	6.7	6.5
2013*	7.3	7.3
2012	6.9	7.0
AVG**	7.2	7.2

* For some reason, I only collected scores for May this year

**Not counting 2023