



Watermelons in Nakasero Market. One can harvest about 12,000 watermelons per quarter FILE PHOTO

market place> WATERMELON PRICES FALL SHARPLY

Traders attribute the nosedive in market prices for watermelon markets to high supply, writes Christine Katende

The current bumper harvest has pushed down watermelon prices on the local market by more than 20 per cent in the last one month, making Uganda one of the cheapest sources of the fruit in East Africa.

According to traders in major city markets such as Kalerwe, Nakawa, St Balikudembe and Nakasero, the drop is a result of high supply by farmers from major melon growing regions including eastern and central Uganda.

Types

There are two major types of watermelon on Uganda market. "We majorly deal in two types, the indigenous dark coloured melons and the Holland sugar berry, commonly known as Zebra go," says Moses Semakula of Nakawa market. Semakula has been dealing in the fruits since 2010. He says buyers today prefer the zebra type because of its sweet taste.

"Zebra has taken over. Most buyers prefer this type to the dark coloured melon," he adds.



5,000

AVERAGE PRICE OF THE BIGGEST
ZEBRA WATERMELON

Supply

About 10 trucks bring in the melons daily to Nakasero which is the busiest of the markets in Kampala. "Every day we offload in excess of 10 trucks. The supply is so high. Some of the trucks are offloaded meaning they are diverted to neighbouring markets which are also overwhelmed," says Musa Mwesi, a wholesale trader at Nakasero market which opens for trucks as early as 2am daily. Ambrose Kibuuka of Kireka reveals, the market

offloads eight trucks of melons which arrive from different districts such as Kayunga and Masindi. "We receive these trucks as early as 1:00am. For we do not sleep," he says.

Prices

The biggest zebra melon costs on average between Shs4000 and Shs5000 according to Grace Kabakumba of Nakasero market.

"Two months ago the same type would go for Shs8000. The supply today is high so we find ourselves competing with other markets," says Kabakumba who buys her stock from Mpigi farmers.

He says most customers prefer melons from Mpigi. "You have to study the market and decide what is good for your customers. Farmers from Mpigi give us the best melons," he adds.



ABOUT ZEBRA WATERMELON:

Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus* var. *lanatus*) is a scrambling and trailing vine in the flowering plant family Cucurbitaceae.

These naturally sweet zebra watermelons are ideal for hotels and restaurants, providing a source of fruits and juices that require no added sugar and can therefore be served to all clients, including those with diabetes.

These watermelons have a standard size of three to five kilogramme per watermelon. However, larger ones can be produced.

Smaller watermelons are ideal for families who would prefer to cut open one watermelon per meal.

At St Balikudembe, the biggest zebra type melon sells at Shs3000 while the black type averages at Shs4000.

"It is true that most buyers prefer the zebra type but customers especially Asians still love the black type. Our profits have taken a nosedive but this happens in business," says Brian Lukabwe, a wholesale trader at St Balikudembe

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5. Broad Spectrum Mycotoxin Binder
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7. Improved Nutrient Utilization
8. Improved Growth rates and Uniformity
9. Better Carcass Quality
10. Anti Free Birds
11. Reduced Veterinary Bills

SAMPLE BROILER FORMULA

INGREDIENT	STARTER	FINISHER
Maize Bran	50Kg	50Kg
Broken Maize	50Kg	50Kg
Fish Meal	25Kg	21Kg
Cotton seed cake	28Kg	25Kg
Shell/Limestone	9Kg	9Kg
Bavorite Extra	5kg	5Kg

OR

USE 5Kg Bavorite Extra in every 100Kg maize Bran for Other Formulas (30Kg per ton Finished Feed)

Added: Cocktail Enzymes, Protein Optimisers, Liver Tonic, Probiotics, Prebiotics, Salt, A. Annua, Extracts, High Grade Vitamins Trace Elements, Mycotoxin Binder, Anticaking Agent, Amino Acids



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10. Improved Egg production
11. Bigger Harder Eggs
12. Anti biotic Free Eggs
13. Reduced Veterinary Bills

SAMPLE LAYERS FORMULA

INGREDIENT	CHICK/ STARTER	GROWERS
Maize Bran	100Kg	100Kg
Broken Maize	15Kg	13Kg
Fish Meal	23Kg	15Kg
Sunflower Cake	7Kg	6Kg
Shell/Limestone	6Kg	7Kg
Bavorite Extra	5kg	5Kg

NOTE
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