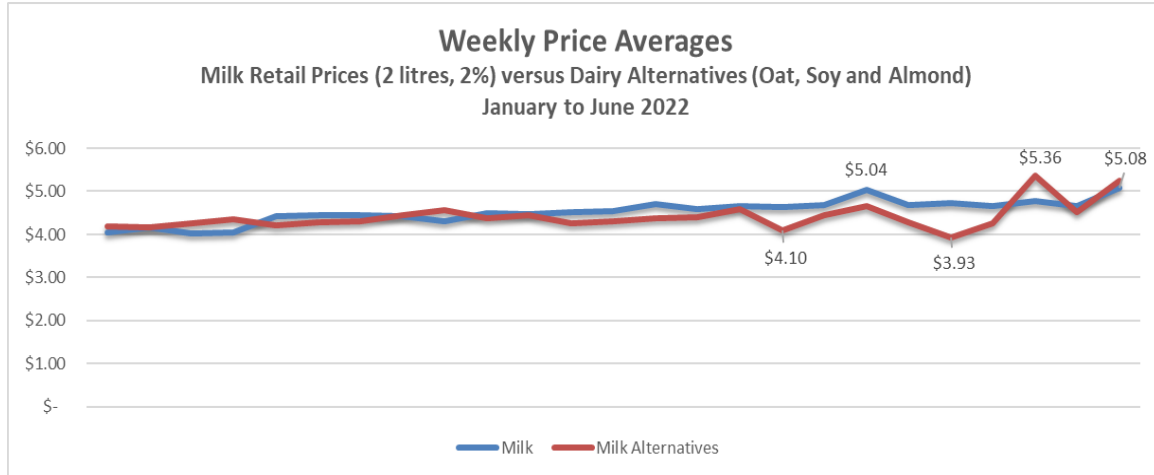


**New report suggests average prices at retail of dairy alternatives are at parity with milk**

**HALIFAX, N.S. (July 14, 2022)** – While the consumption of fluid milk is at an all-time low, dairy alternatives are becoming more visible at the grocery store. Canadians are buying more dairy alternatives for a variety of reasons, but the cost of these products has been considered prohibitive for a long time. However, dairy products are becoming more expensive in Canada. The Canadian Dairy Commission called for a record increase in the price of milk on the farm by 8.4% last fall only to increase it even more by 2.5% in September of this year. Following this, the **Agri-Food Analytics Lab** at Dalhousie University, in partnership with the advanced price analytics company, **BetterCart Analytics**, compared prices of fluid milk across the country with dairy alternatives. This is the first time a comparative analysis looking at both milk and dairy alternative retail prices has been conducted.

The survey only looked at the price of 2-litre milk (2%), which is one of the most popular formats sold in Canada, and compared it with soy, almond, and oat-based beverages. Data was collected between January 1 and June 30, 2022, in 10 provinces. The 2-litre format was chosen since dairy alternatives are sold in formats of about 2 litres. Stores operated by Walmart, Loblaw, Empire/Sobeys, Save-on-Foods and Metro were included in the analyses. Almost 83,000 data points were included in the survey. The analysis is based on averages, from week to week, as all brands carried by all retailers were included in the survey. Organic products were not included in the survey.

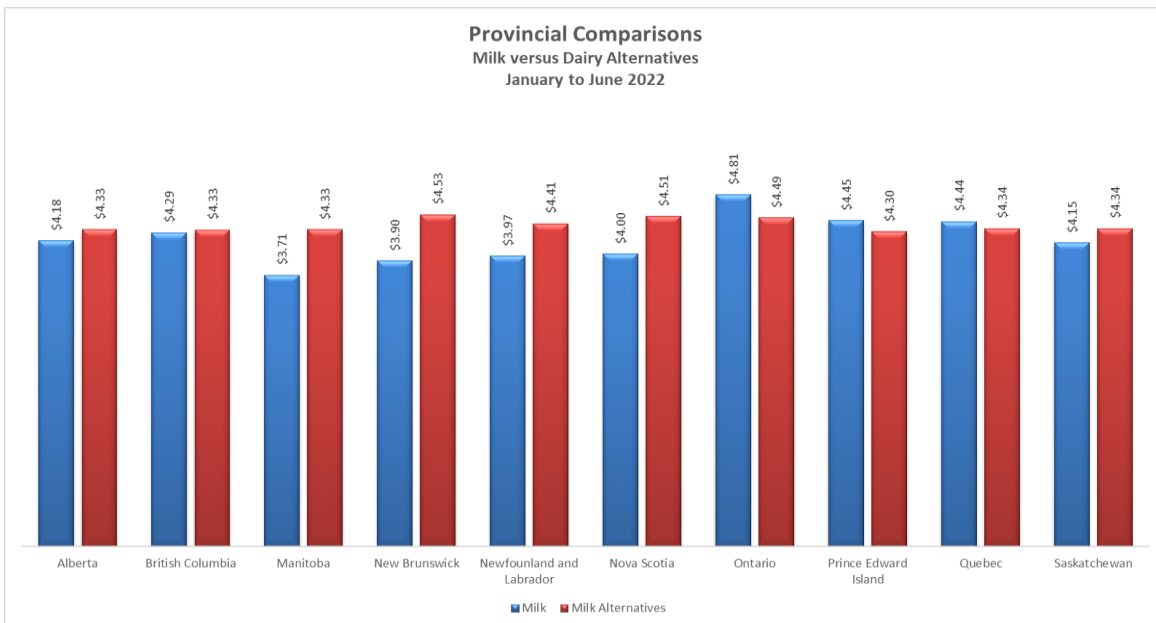


First off, between January and June 2022, we noticed that prices for both milk and dairy alternatives increased significantly. While milk increased by 25% since January, dairy alternatives increased by 31%. Over 6 months, prices for dairy alternatives appear to fluctuate more than regular milk prices but have stayed below the milk average for the most part. While the lowest average price surveyed for milk was \$4.03 in January, the lowest average price for dairy alternatives was \$3.93 in May. The highest average price for milk was \$5.08 at the end of June. The highest average price for dairy alternatives was \$5.36 in early June.

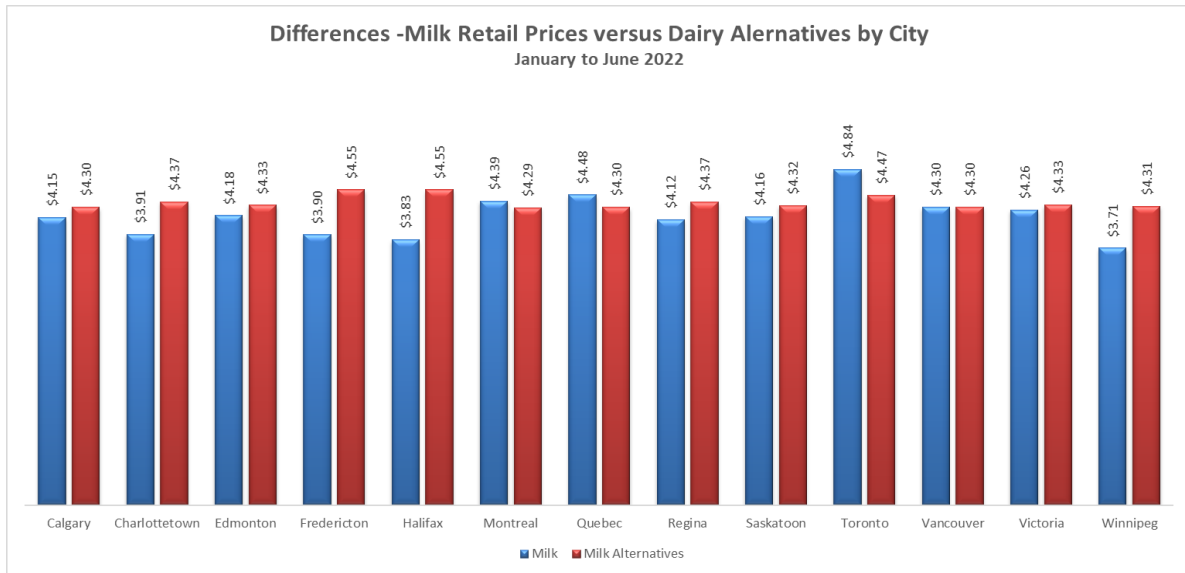
Even though parity between these two categories has been achieved for the most part, these results were surprising, knowing that milk prices are heavily influenced by the Canadian Dairy Commission’s mandate to set milk prices on the farm. Some provinces regulate prices at retail as well and there have been few loss-leading cases since the start of the pandemic. In essence, how prices have behaved in this section of the grocery store is difficult to explain, based on the evidence at hand.

We also looked at provincial comparisons. Dairy alternatives are cheaper in three provinces: Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. Dairy alternatives are on average 7% cheaper, the highest in the country. Alternatively, it is in Manitoba where the differential between milk and dairy alternatives is the highest, at 17%. All three other Atlantic provinces also have high average differentials: New Brunswick (16%), Nova Scotia (13%), Newfoundland and Labrador (11%). With milk being 1% cheaper, British Columbia is essentially at parity. When all provinces are combined, milk is 5% cheaper than dairy alternatives.

“Dairy alternatives are competitively priced in Canada,” stated Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University. “Dairy alternatives operate in a much freer market which may explain why prices tend to fluctuate more than milk prices,” said Charlebois.



Finally, our analysis looked at prices in several cities in the country. Cities where dairy alternatives are cheaper included Montreal (2%), Quebec City (4%), and Toronto (8%). Oakville (not in Figure) is where dairy alternatives in the country are the cheapest compared with regular milk, at 19%. Vancouver saw no difference in price between categories. All other cities included in the survey saw prices of dairy alternatives being more expensive than milk. The highest differential was in Halifax, at 19%, followed by Fredericton at 17%.



The report provides evidence that vegetable-based beverages, positioned to compete with milk, are now competitively priced in most parts of the country. Unlike meat analogs, dairy alternatives do offer a financially accessible option for Canadians who want to reduce their consumption of fluid milk.

**End of report.**

Full report here: <https://www.dal.ca/sites/agri-food.html>

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**Methodology:** Using machine learning and artificial intelligence (ML-driven AI), the survey examined over 82,485 discrete price data points across the country, from January to June 2022. The survey compared retail prices for the 2-litre milk format (2%) with oat, soy, and almond beverages. Prices at stores operated by Loblaws, Empire/Sobeys, Metro, Walmart, and Save-on-Foods, were analyzed, across 10 provinces. Not all prices were discounted. The report does not identify brands or stores explicitly, though de-aggregated insights are available from BetterCart Analytics, upon request. Comparisons were made based on weekly averages for both dairy-based products and plant-based protein analogues. Prices for each product, within the distinct protein verticals under investigation, were averaged successively at the following levels: by store, city, and province. Note that the nutrient density of products was not considered for this survey.

**Disclosure:** Funding for this survey was provided by **BetterCart Analytics** and **Dalhousie University**.