

Chapter 1.

Introduction

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Florida ranks second among the states in fresh market vegetable production on the basis of harvested acreage (10.9%) and value (14.9%) and production (9.5%) of the crops grown (Table 1). In 2007, vegetables were harvested from 207,800 acres and had a farm value exceeding 1.7 billion dollars.

A more detailed analysis of the national importance of Florida production of specific vegetables indicates that Florida ranks first in fresh-market value of snap bean, cucumber, squash, sweet corn, sweet pepper, tomatoes and watermelons. Florida ranks second in fresh market value of strawberry and third in cabbage.

More than 40 different crops are grown commercially in Florida with 7 of these exceeding \$100 million in value. Harvest occurs in late fall, winter and spring when at times the only available United States supply is from Florida.

On the basis of value, in 2007 tomato production accounted for about 25.9 % of the state's total value. Other major crops with a lesser proportion of the 2007 crop value were strawberry (18.4 %), snap beans (12.1 %), sweet pepper (10.2 %), potatoes (9.1 %), watermelon (8.5 %), sweet corn (6.2 %), cucumber (4.0 %) and squash (3.0 %).

Table 1. Leading fresh market vegetable producing states, 2007.

Rank	Harvested acreage		Production		Value	
	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total
1	California	44.1	California	49.1	California	50.4
2	Florida	10.9	Florida	9.5	Florida	14.9
3	Arizona	6.8	Arizona	7.4	Arizona	7.0
4	Georgia	6.2	Georgia	4.9	Georgia	4.4
5	New York	3.8	Texas	3.6	New York	3.9

Source: Vegetables, USDA Ag Statistics, 2007.