

Chapter 1.

Introduction

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Florida ranks second among the states in fresh market vegetable production on the basis of harvested acreage (10.7 %), production (9.3 %) and value (13.3 %) of the crops grown (Table 1). In 2009, vegetables were harvested from 220,800 acres and had a farm value exceeding 1.8 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, tomatoes and watermelons. Florida ranks second in fresh market value of strawberry, sweet pepper and 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 2009 tomato production accounted for about 28.5 % of the state's total value. Other major crops with a lesser proportion of the 2009 crop value were strawberry (17.2 %), sweet corn (12.4 %), sweet pepper (10.9 %), watermelon (7.4 %), potatoes (7.0 %), snap beans (6.2 %), cucumber (4.3 %), cabbage (3.3 %) and squash (2.8 %).

Table 1. Leading fresh market vegetable producing states, 2009.

Rank	Harvested acreage		Production		Value	
	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total
1	California	43.9	California	49.4	California	52.1
2	Florida	10.7	Florida	9.3	Florida	13.3
3	Arizona	6.7	Arizona	7.1	Arizona	7.4
4	Georgia	6.4	Georgia	5.1	Georgia	5.1
5	New York	3.8	Washington	3.6	New York	2.7

Source: Vegetables, USDA Ag Statistics, 2010.