

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

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Florida ranks second among the states in fresh market vegetable production on the basis of harvested acreage (8.4) and value (12.3) and third in production (8.3) of the crops grown (Table 1.). In 2006, vegetables were harvested from 196,600 acres and had a farm value exceeding 1.6 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, tomatoes, sweet corn and watermelons. Florida ranks second in fresh market value of sweet pepper and strawberry.

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 2006 tomato production accounted for about 33 % of the state's total value. Other major crops with a lesser proportion of the 2006 crop value were strawberry (14.6 %), pepper (11.4 %), potatoes (8.9 %), snap beans (8.6 %), sweet corn (7.2 %), watermelon (6.8 %), cucumber (4.5 %) and squash (2.4 %).

**Table 1.** Leading fresh market vegetable producing states, 2006.

Rank	Harvested acreage		Production		Value	
	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total	State	Percent of total
1	California	44.4	California	48.1	California	51.3
2	Florida	8.4	Arizona	8.9	Florida	12.3
3	Georgia	7.7	Florida	8.3	Arizona	7.2
4	Arizona	7.5	Georgia	5.8	Georgia	5.2
5	New York	3.4	Texas	3.6	New York	3.3

Source: Vegetables, USDA Ag Statistics, 2006.