



# Specialty Crop Outlook

**Elizabeth Canales**  
**Mississippi State University**

Southern Outlook Conference  
Atlanta, GA  
September 19, 2022





# Outline

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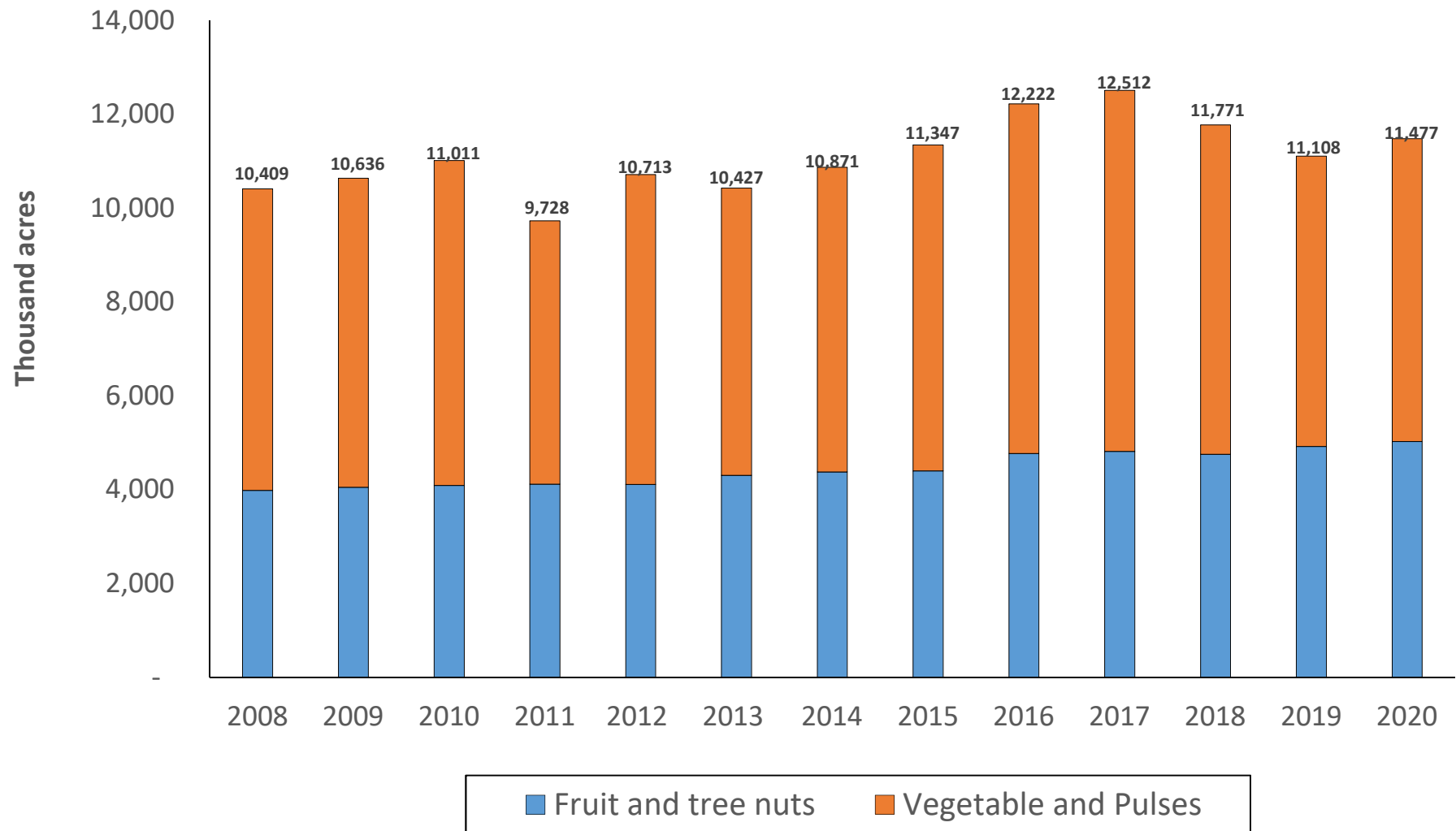
- ❑ General overview: acreage and production
- ❑ Imports
- ❑ Industry trends, challenges, and opportunities



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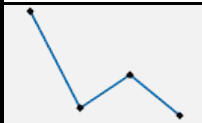
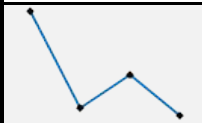


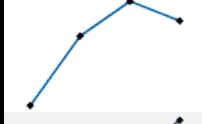
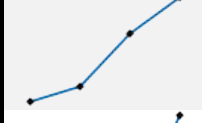

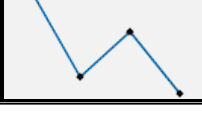
# General overview: acreage and production

# Vegetable, fruit, and tree nut acreage










Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022; Fruit Yearbook, 2021.

# U.S. vegetable and pulse industry overview

| Item                             | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   |    | % Change<br>2020-2021 |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|-----------------------|
| Area harvested (1,000 acres)     | 7,095  | 6,371  | 6,618  | 6,309  |    | -4.7                  |
| Production (Million cwt)         | 1,249  | 1,152  | 1,151  | 1,084  |    | -5.9                  |
| Crop value (\$ millions)         | 19,274 | 19,137 | 19,780 | 18,253 |    | -7.7                  |
| Unit value (\$/cwt)              | 15.43  | 16.61  | 17.18  | 16.85  |   | -2                    |
| Imports (\$ millions)            | 13,358 | 13,885 | 15,624 | 16,810 |  | 7.6                   |
| Exports (\$ millions)            | 6,917  | 7,177  | 6,844  | 7,292  |  | 6.6                   |
| Per-capita availability (Pounds) | 402.6  | 387.3  | 395.2  | 384.3  |  | -2.8                  |

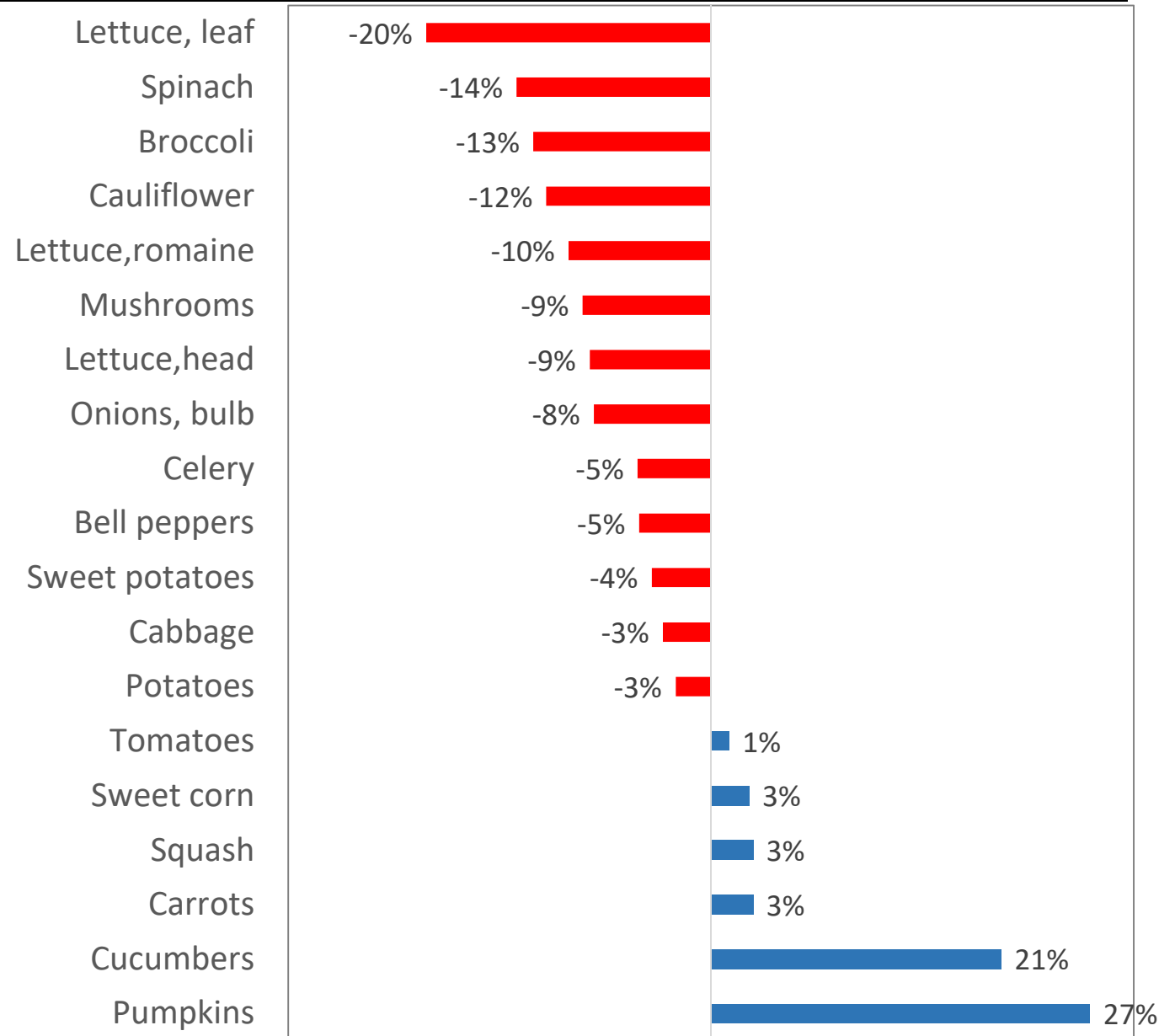
Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Outlook, April 2022.

# Fresh vegetable overview 2018-2021

| Item                             | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021   |   | % Change<br>2020-2021 |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|-----------------------|
| Area harvested (1,000 acres)     | 2,485  | 2,357  | 2,280  | 2,274  |    | -0.3                  |
| Production (Million cwt)         | 341    | 313    | 304    | 290    |    | -4.5                  |
| Crop value (\$ millions)         | 10,695 | 10,780 | 11,380 | 9,890  |    | -13.1                 |
| Unit value (\$/cwt)              | 31.32  | 34.47  | 37.47  | 34.1   |   | -9.0                  |
| Imports (\$ millions)            | 7,943  | 8,511  | 9,526  | 10,009 |  | 5.1                   |
| Exports (\$ millions)            | 2,312  | 2,392  | 2,306  | 2,384  |  | 3.4                   |
| Per-capita availability (Pounds) | 154.4  | 149.2  | 146.9  | 146.1  |  | -0.6                  |

Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Outlook, April 2022.

# Change in production, 2020-2021



Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Outlook, April 2022.

# Production trends for major vegetables

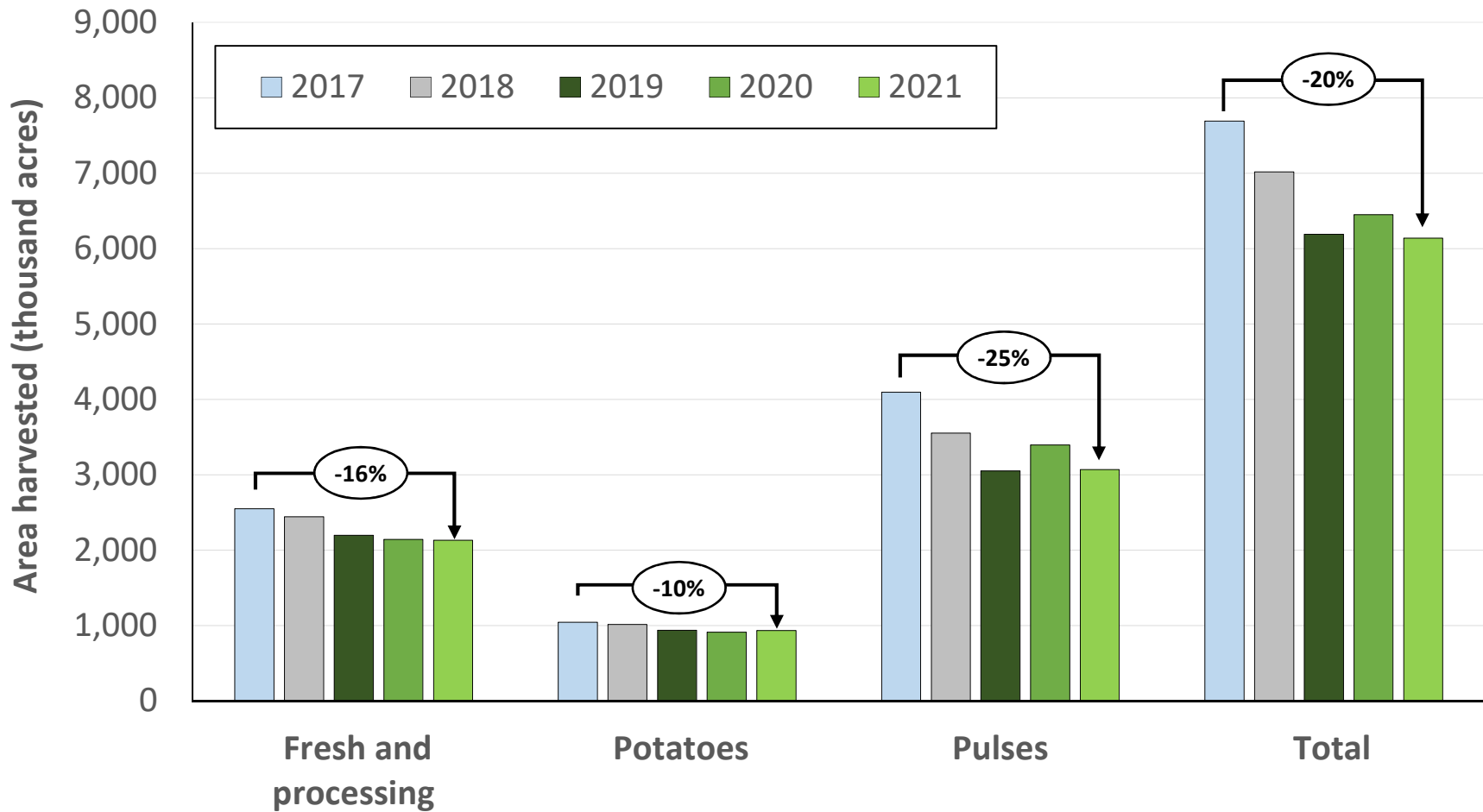
## Production (in Million pounds)

Source: USDA-ERS.  
Vegetables and Pulses  
Outlook, April 2022.

| Commodity        | 2018   | 2019   | 2020   | 2021p  |  |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| Potatoes         | 45,002 | 42,442 | 42,002 | 40,967 |  |
| Onions, bulb     | 6,283  | 6,134  | 6,422  | 5,890  |  |
| Lettuce, head    | 4,056  | 4,201  | 3,845  | 3,514  |  |
| Sweet potatoes   | 2,738  | 3,197  | 3,013  | 2,885  |  |
| Lettuce, romaine | 2,923  | 2,741  | 3,029  | 2,723  |  |
| Carrots          | 3,662  | 2,432  | 2,416  | 2,489  |  |
| Tomatoes         | 2,710  | 2,172  | 2,109  | 2,137  |  |
| Pumpkins         | 1,910  | 1,750  | 1,723  | 2,186  |  |
| Cabbage          | 1,730  | 1,946  | 1,876  | 1,813  |  |
| Sweet corn       | 2,255  | 1,677  | 1,385  | 1,422  |  |
| Celery           | 1,627  | 1,574  | 1,613  | 1,529  |  |
| Broccoli         | 1,678  | 1,584  | 1,526  | 1,333  |  |
| Lettuce, leaf    | 1,073  | 1,247  | 1,564  | 1,248  |  |
| Bell peppers     | 1,290  | 1,159  | 1,058  | 1,004  |  |
| Cauliflower      | 931    | 1,006  | 894    | 789    |  |
| Mushrooms        | 782    | 767    | 761    | 691    |  |
| Squash           | 739    | 709    | 671    | 691    |  |
| Spinach          | 674    | 856    | 645    | 556    |  |
| Cucumbers        | 560    | 459    | 330    | 398    |  |

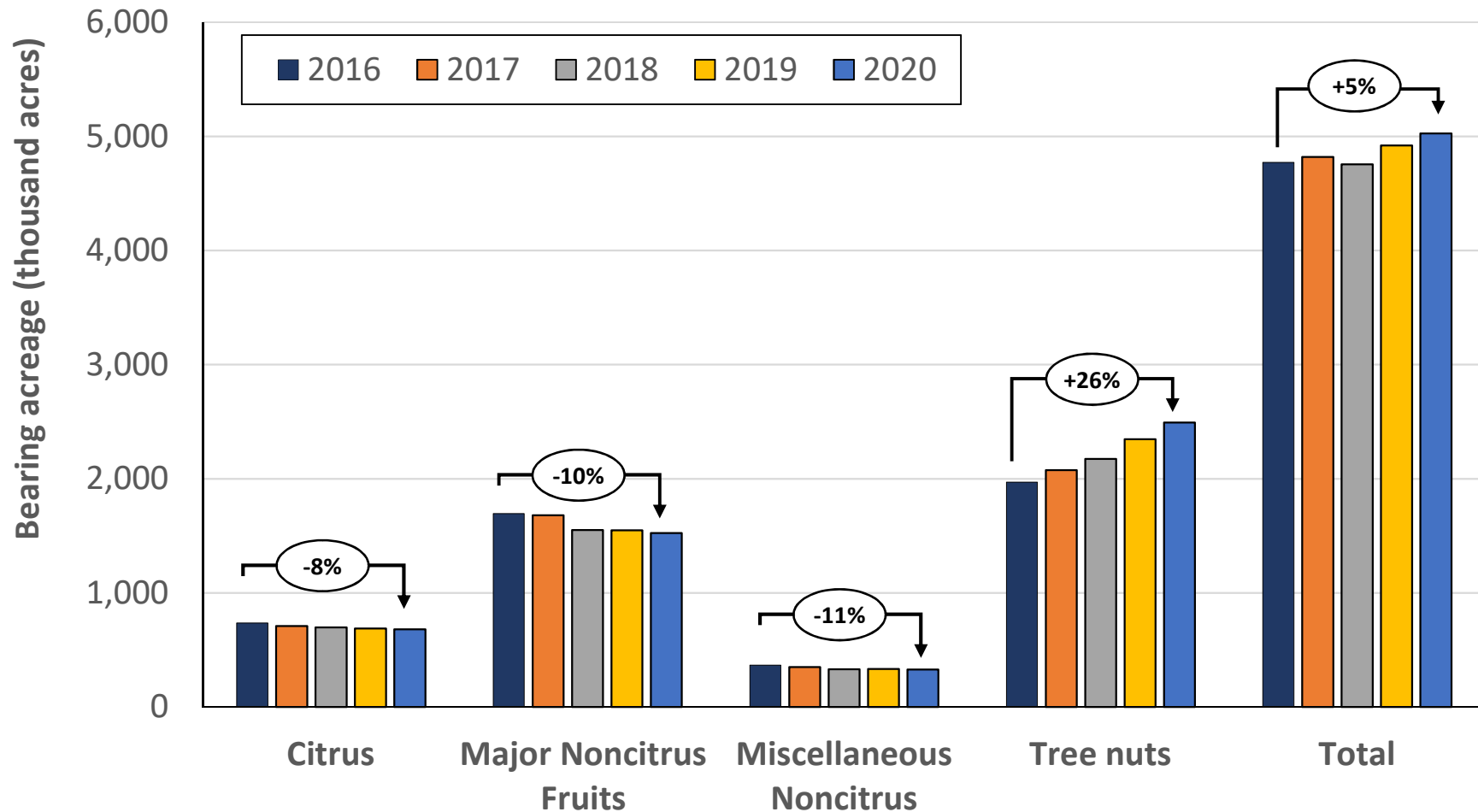


# Vegetables and pulses harvested area declined 20% from 2016 to 2021



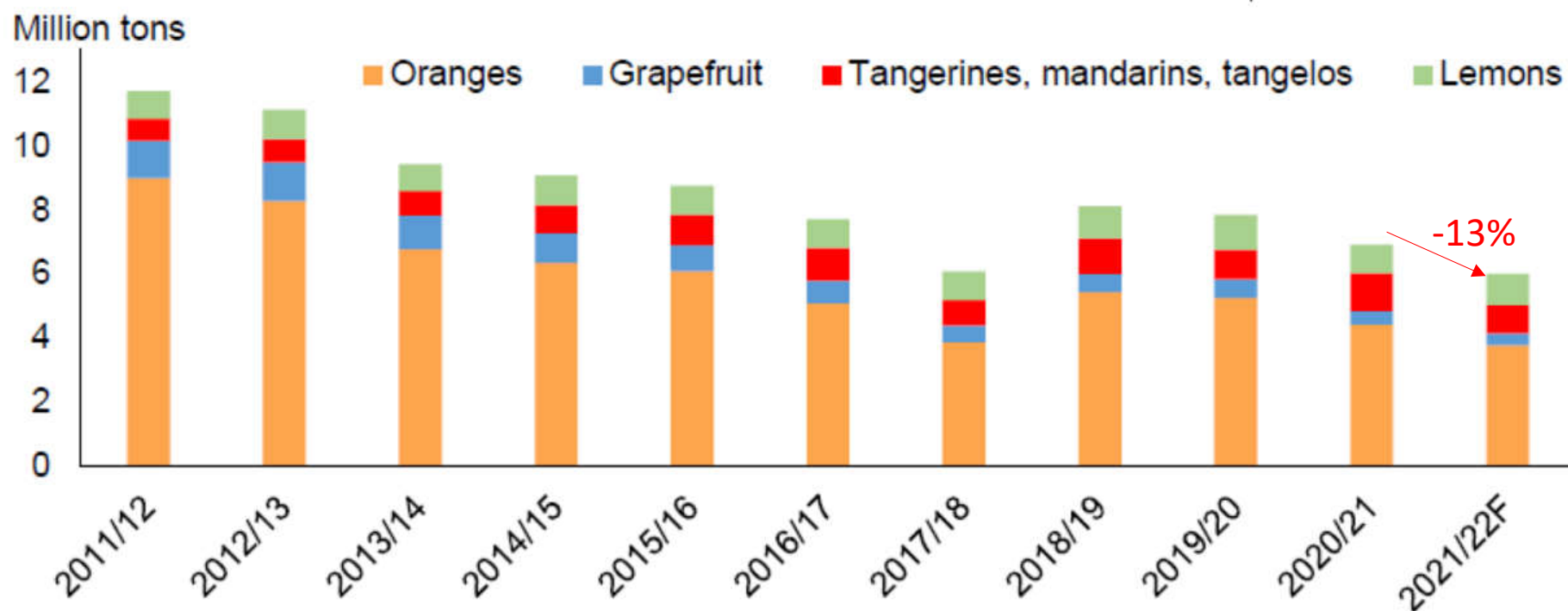
Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022.

Citrus and non-citrus fruit bearing acreage has declined while tree nuts acreage increased from 2016 to 2021



Source: USDA-ERS. Fruit Yearbook, 2021.

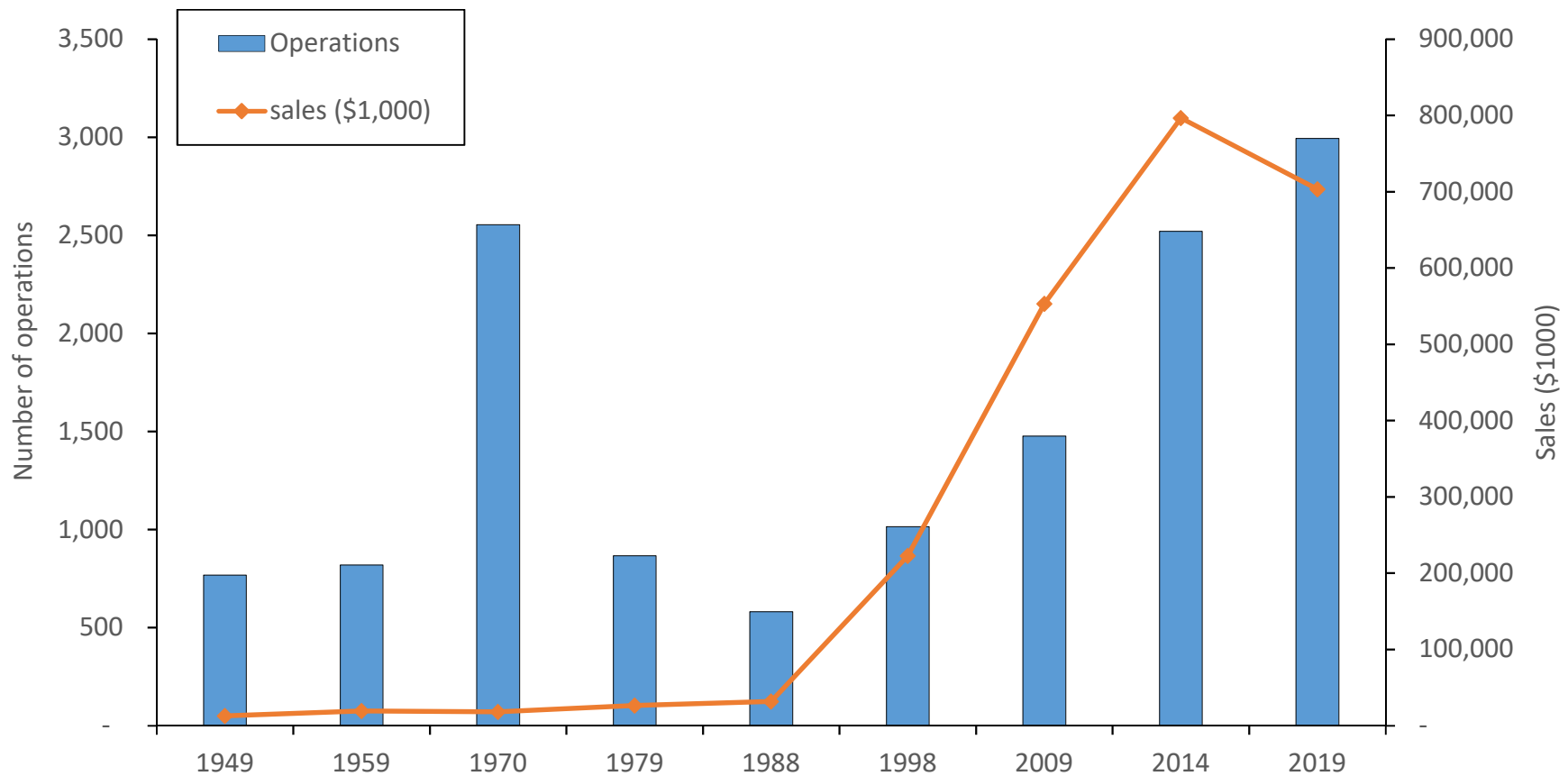
# Citrus production continues to decline



F = forecast.

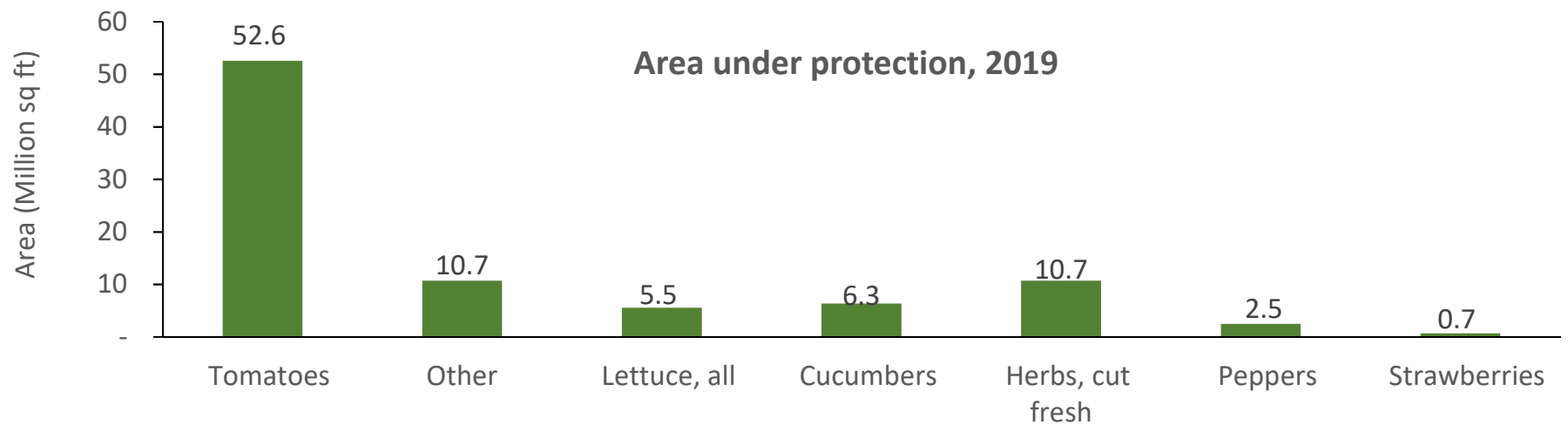
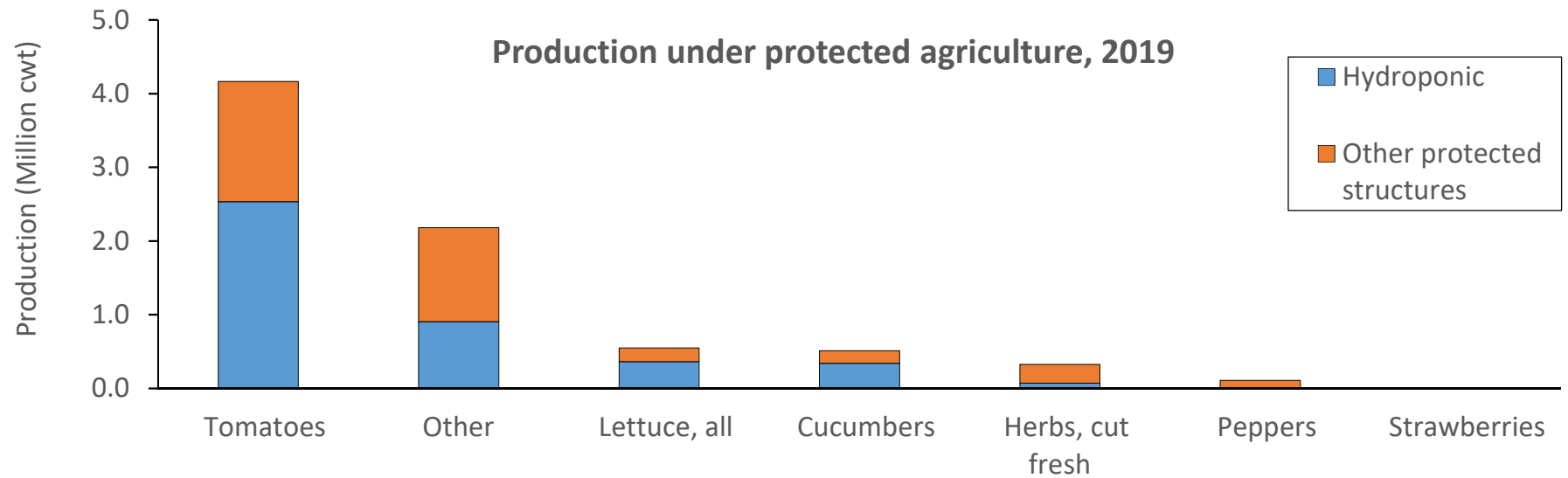
Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *Crop Production*, March 2022 issue, and *Citrus Fruit Summary*, various issues.

# Food crop production under protected agriculture have risen over the years



Source: USDA NASS. 2019 Census of Horticultural Specialties.

# Area and production under protected agriculture



Source: USDA NASS. 2019 Census of Horticultural Specialties.



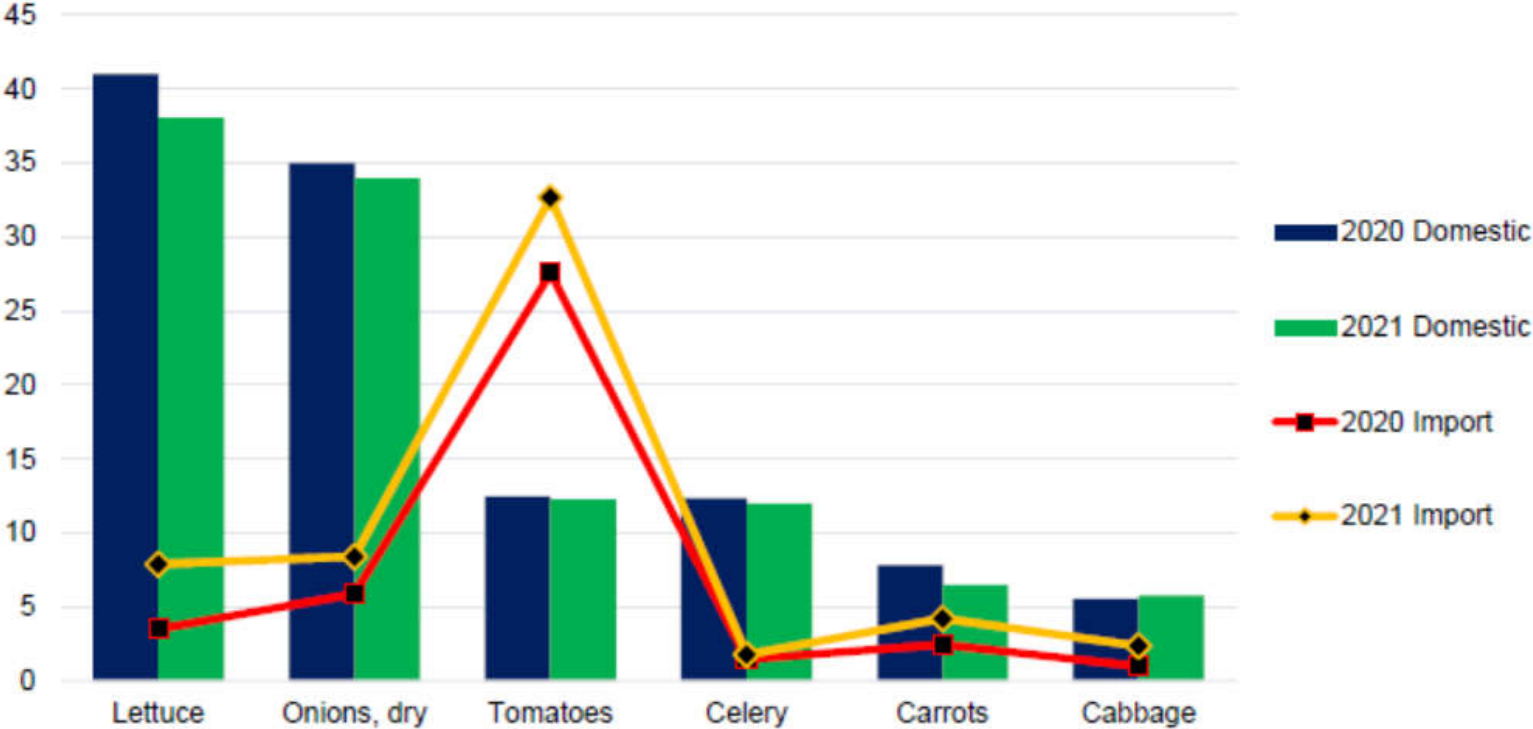
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# Imports

# Domestic supply of major vegetable crops has declined, while imports have increased

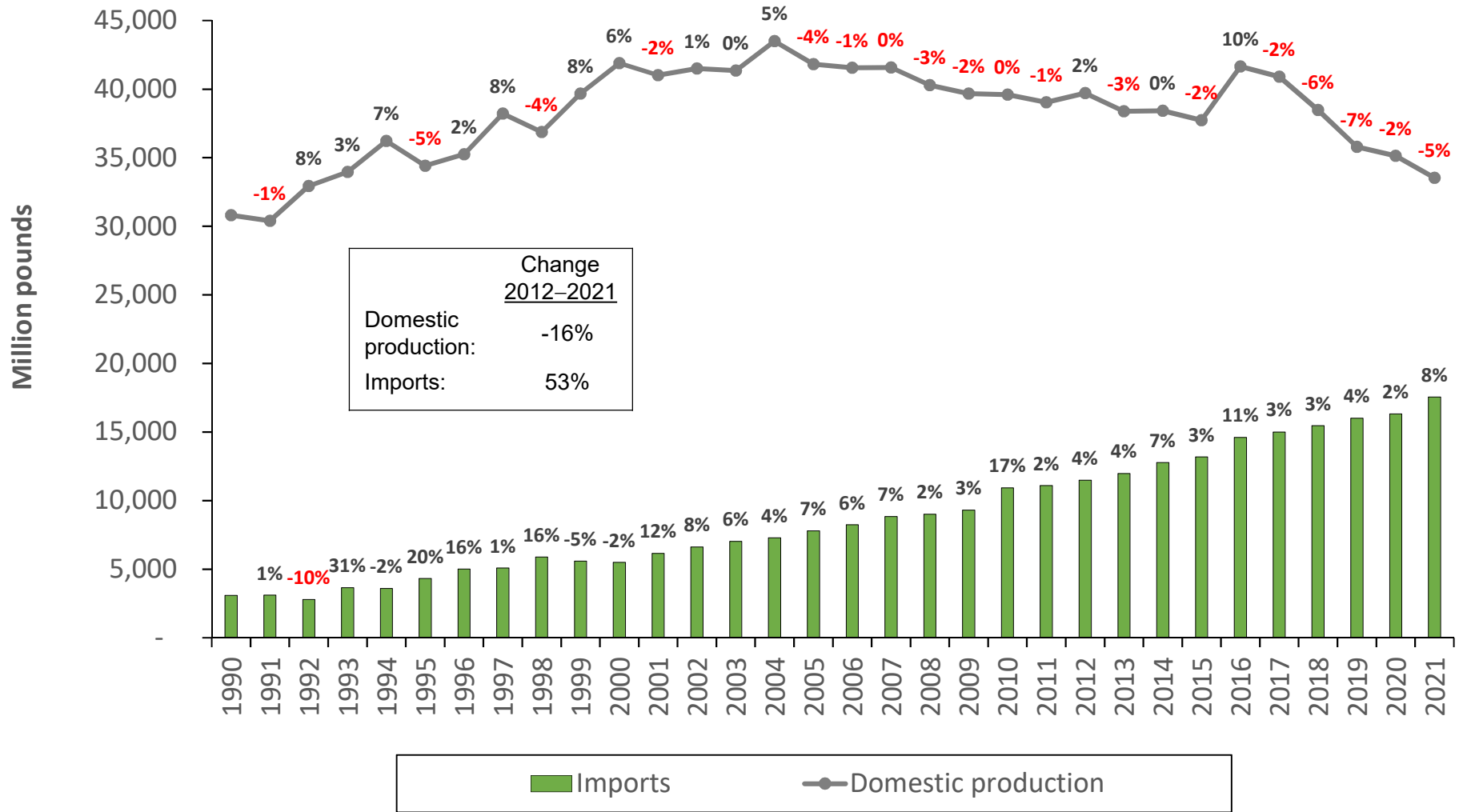
**Selected domestic and import fresh market vegetable shipments, January–September, 2020–21**

Volume (10 million pounds)



Note: January–September represents year-to-date (YTD) shipping movement.  
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Market News, *Movement Reports*.

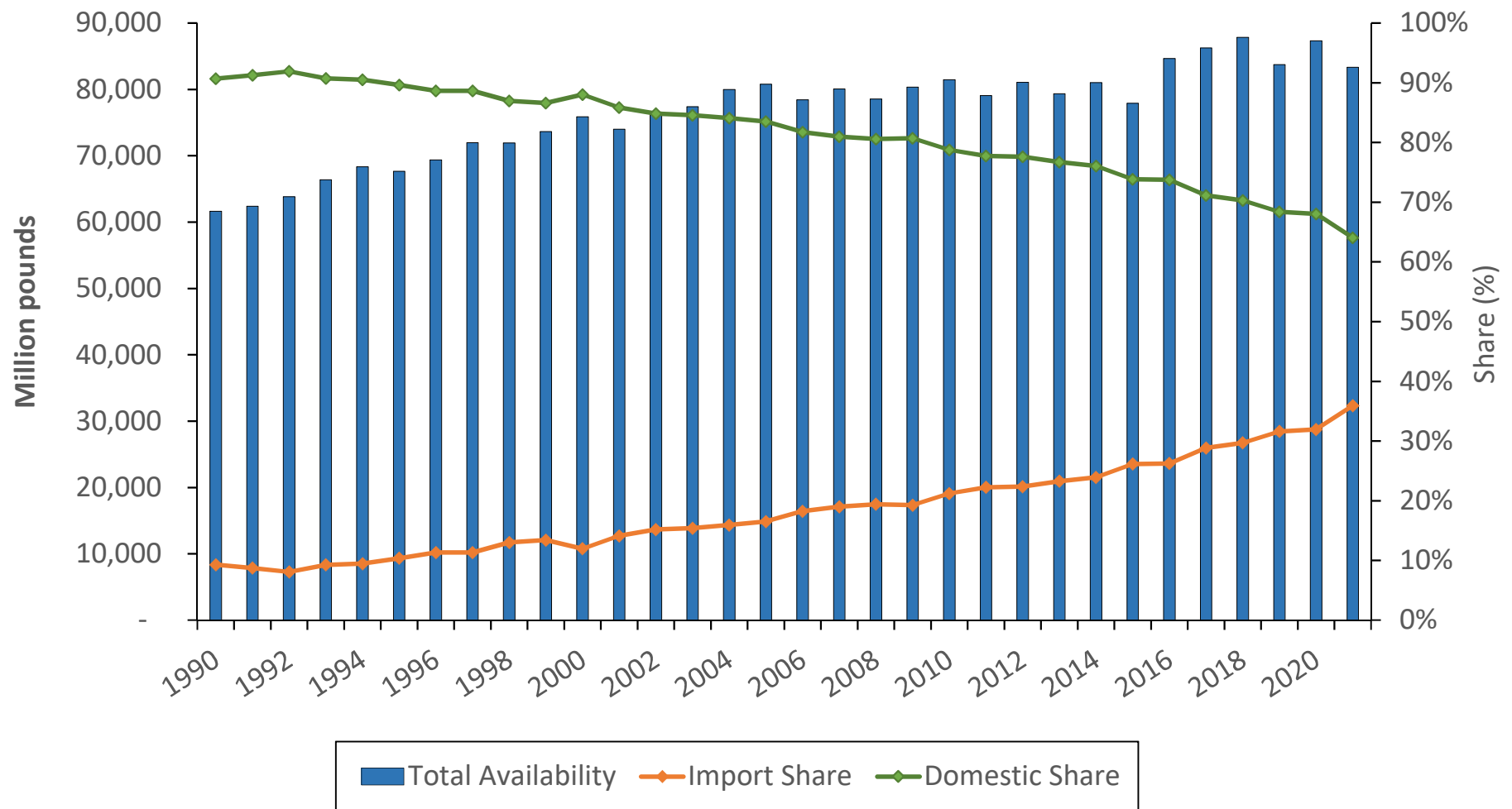
# Fresh vegetable production and import volumes (YoY % changes)



Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022.

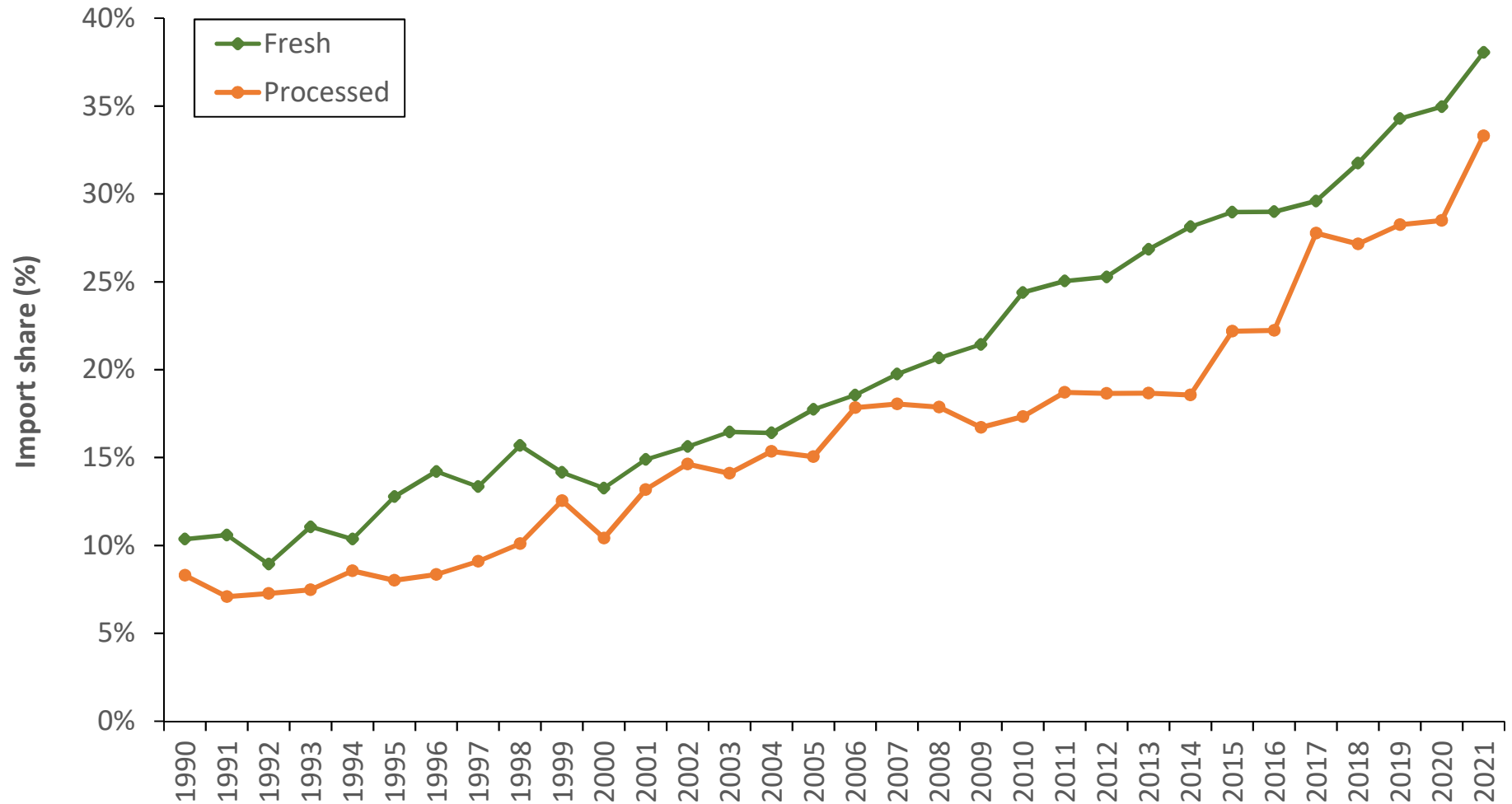


# Imports and domestic production share of vegetable availability



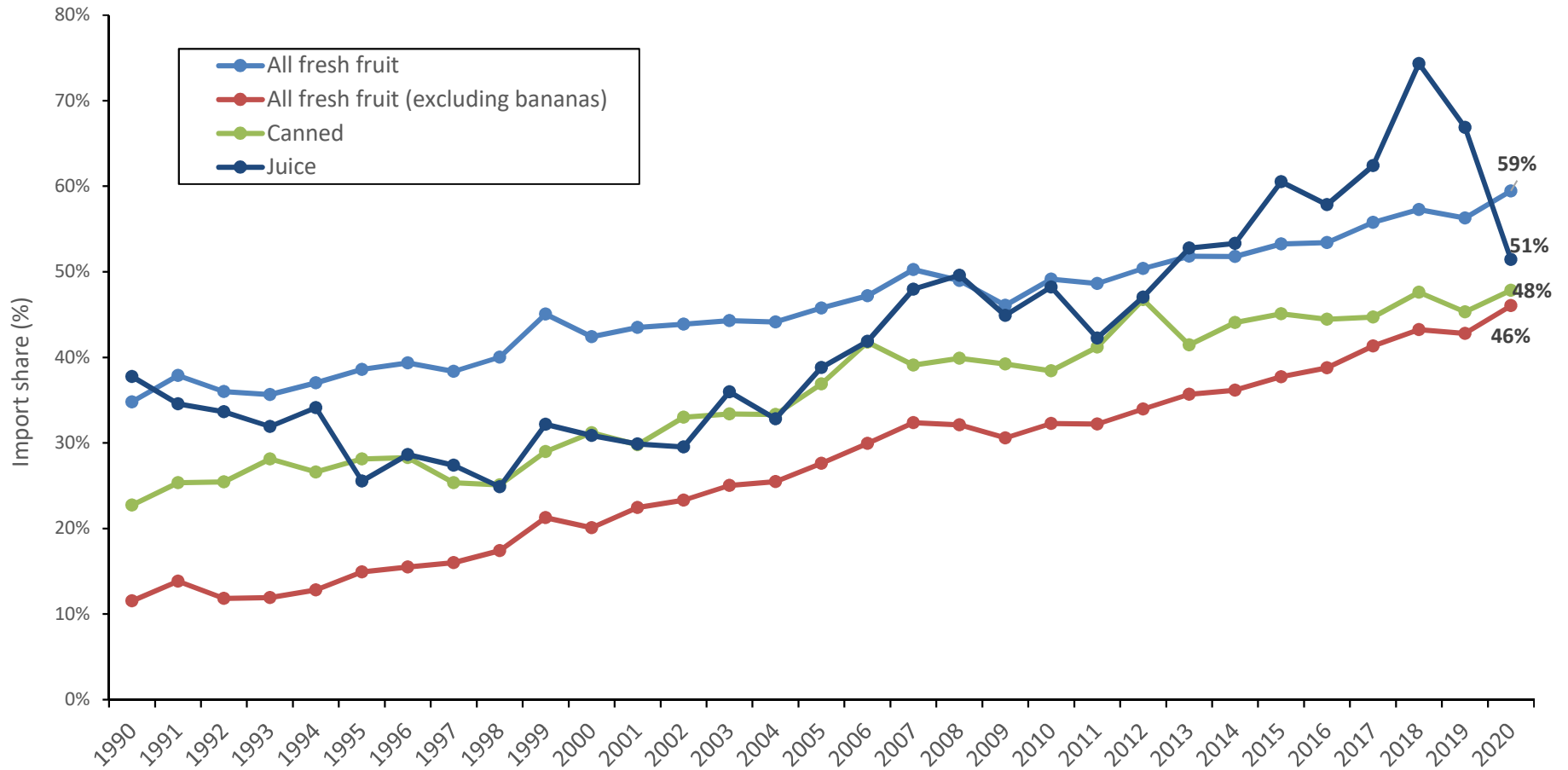
Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022.

# Import share of fresh and processing vegetable availability



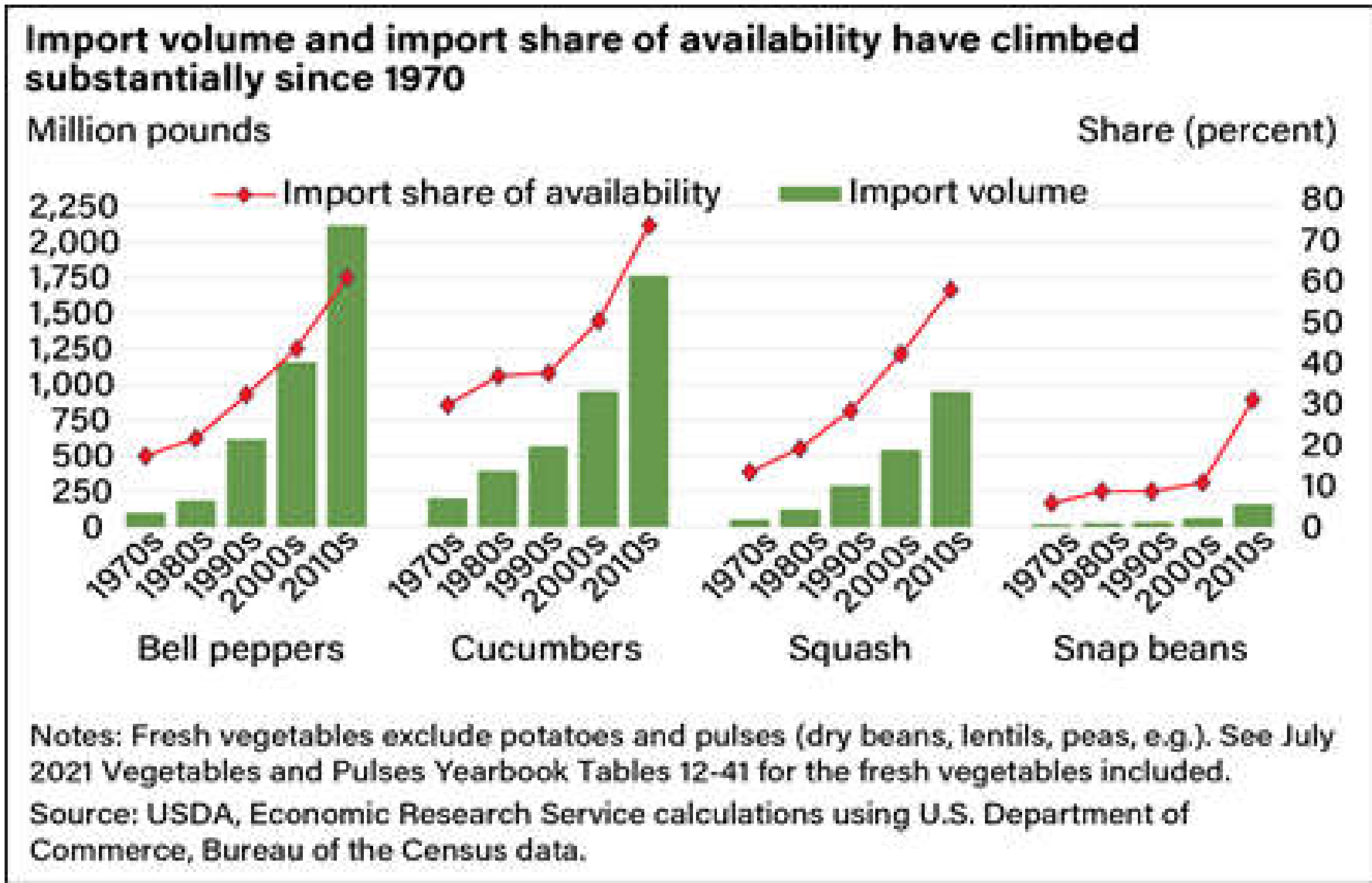
Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022.

# Imports share of domestic fresh fruit disappearance



Source: USDA-ERS. Fruit and Tree Nuts Yearbook, 2021.

# Imports of major crops have significantly increased



Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Outlook, April 2021.

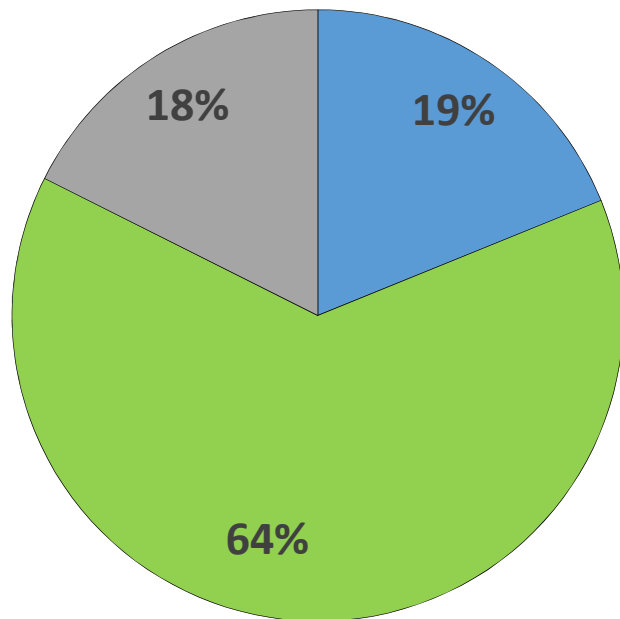
| Commodity                | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  | Change<br>2020-21 |  |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|--|
| <u>Million Pounds</u>    |       |       |       |       |                   |  |
| Tomatoes, all            | 4,092 | 4,023 | 4,053 | 4,266 | 5                 |  |
| Cucumbers                | 2,081 | 2,145 | 2,193 | 2,315 | 6                 |  |
| Peppers, bell            | 1,535 | 1,613 | 1,667 | 1,843 | 11                |  |
| Onions                   | 1,301 | 1,253 | 1,304 | 1,555 | 19                |  |
| Squash                   | 1,130 | 1,206 | 1,210 | 1,221 | 1                 |  |
| Peppers, chile           | 994   | 957   | 970   | 1,098 | 13                |  |
| Lettuce, all             | 617   | 789   | 821   | 931   | 13                |  |
| Potatoes, excluding seed | 911   | 763   | 927   | 892   | -4                |  |
| Asparagus                | 568   | 572   | 586   | 665   | 13                |  |
| Broccoli                 | 423   | 493   | 542   | 553   | 2                 |  |
| Carrots                  | 494   | 504   | 467   | 527   | 13                |  |
| Artichokes               | 346   | 357   | 321   | 335   | 4                 |  |
| Cabbage                  | 253   | 285   | 279   | 291   | 4                 |  |
| Garlic                   | 337   | 277   | 274   | 283   | 3                 |  |
| Brussels sprouts         | 187   | 194   | 236   | 246   | 4                 |  |
| cauliflower              | 172   | 231   | 218   | 238   | 9                 |  |
| Celery                   | 132   | 244   | 220   | 230   | 5                 |  |
| Snap beans               | 192   | 201   | 218   | 228   | 5                 |  |
| Mushrooms                | 151   | 168   | 179   | 195   | 9                 |  |
| Sweet corn               | 118   | 127   | 160   | 194   | 21                |  |
| Eggplant                 | 175   | 175   | 186   | 191   | 3                 |  |
| Okra                     | 160   | 162   | 164   | 163   | -1                |  |
| Pumpkin                  | 77    | 92    | 122   | 106   | -13               |  |
| Sweet potatoes           | 29    | 25    | 20    | 85    | 322               |  |

Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Outlook, April 2022.

# Most imports originate from Mexico and Canada

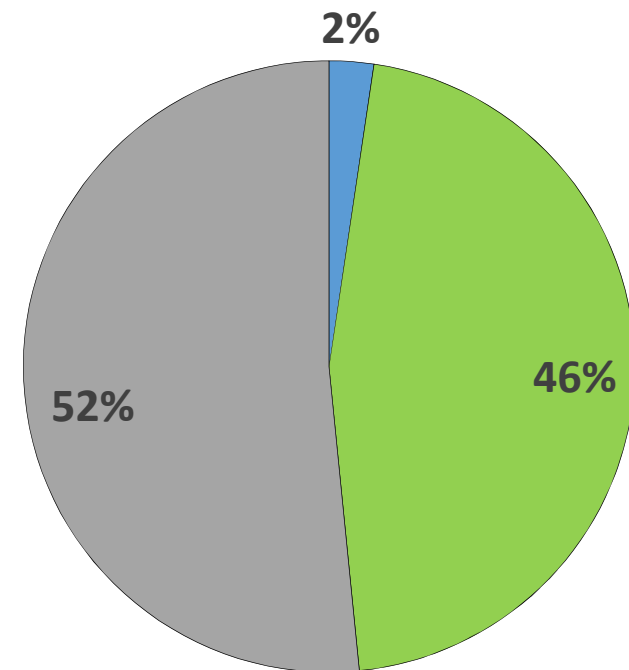
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Vegetable Imports, 2021



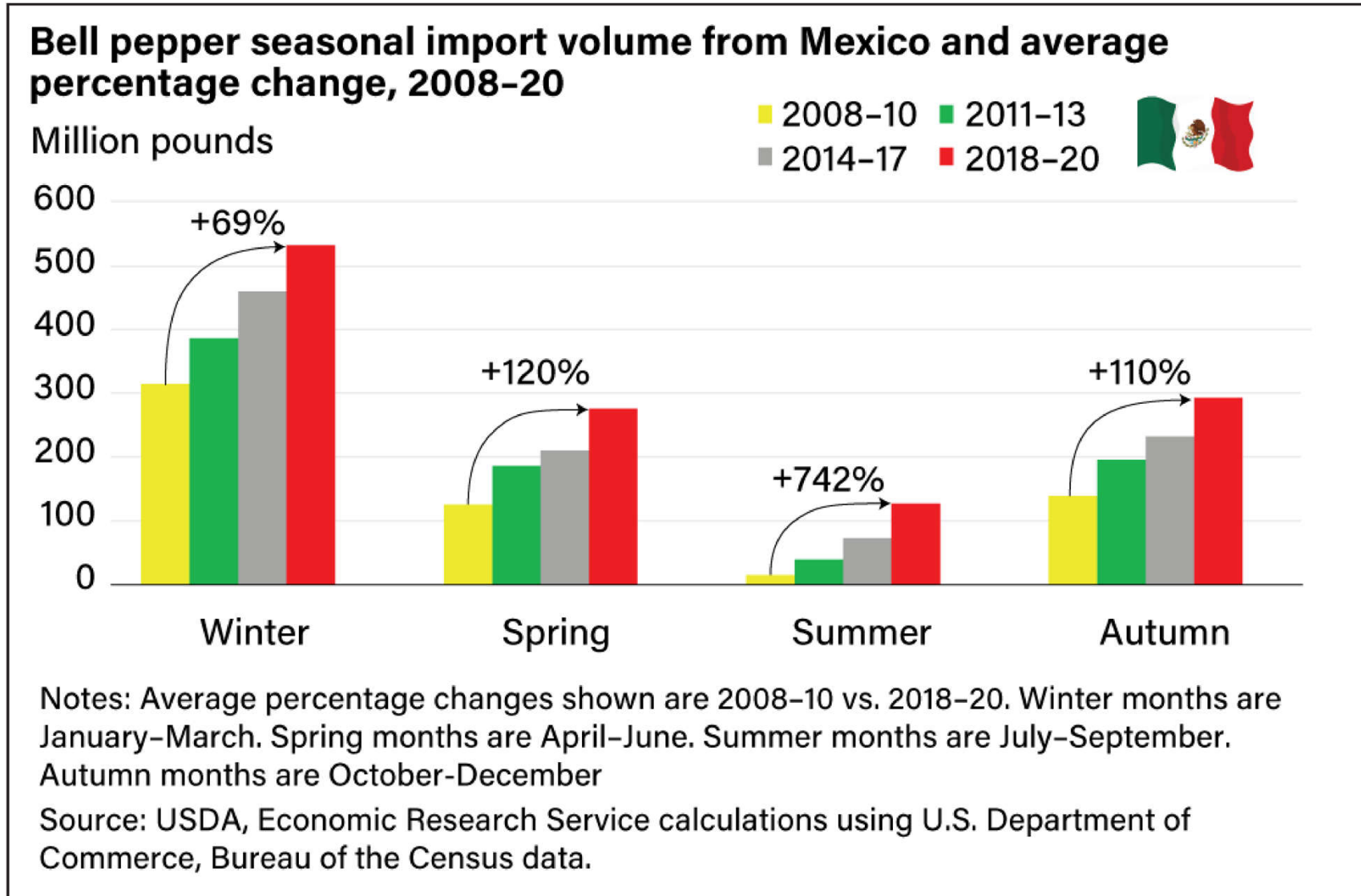
■ Canada ■ Mexico ■ Rest of the world

Fruit and Nut Imports, 2021



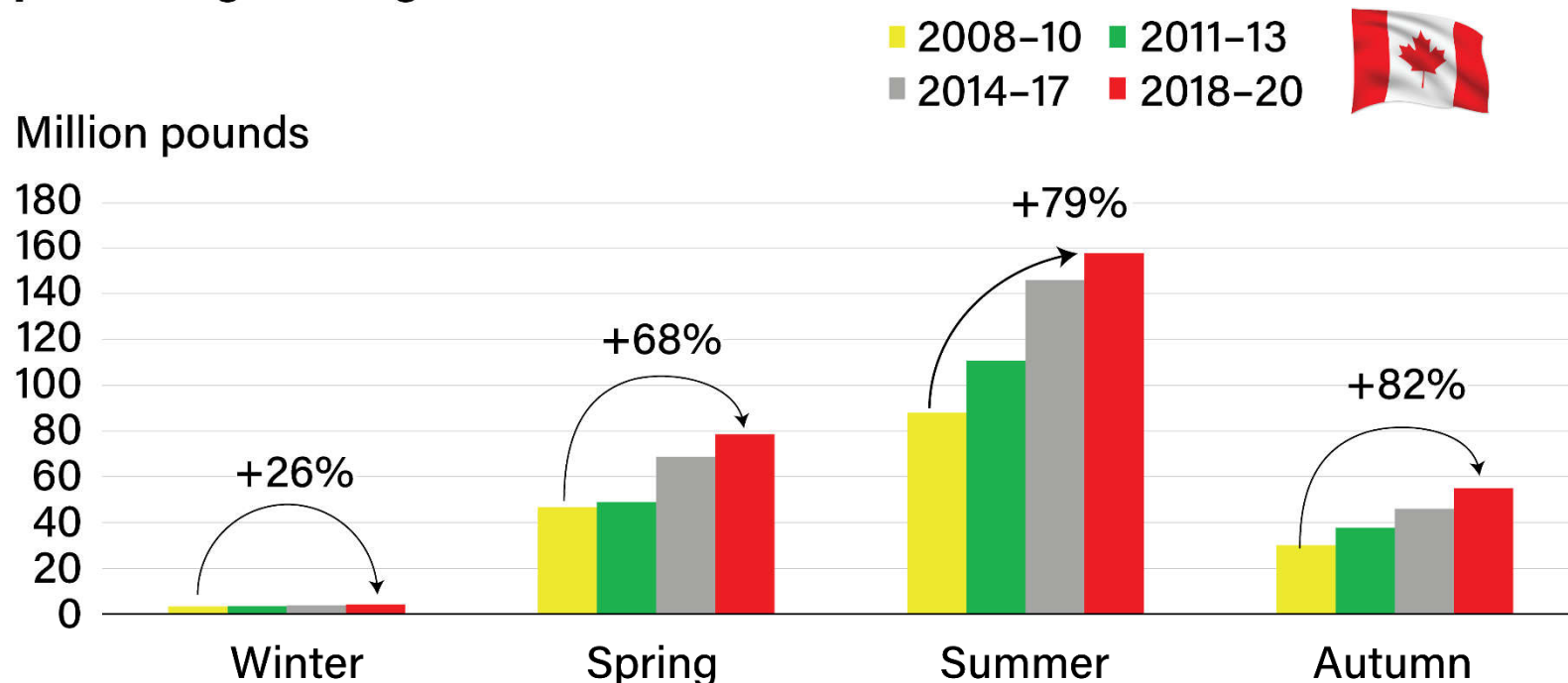
■ Canada ■ Mexico ■ Rest of the world

# Import window continues to expand



# Import window continues to expand

## Bell pepper seasonal import volume from Canada and average percentage change, 2008-20

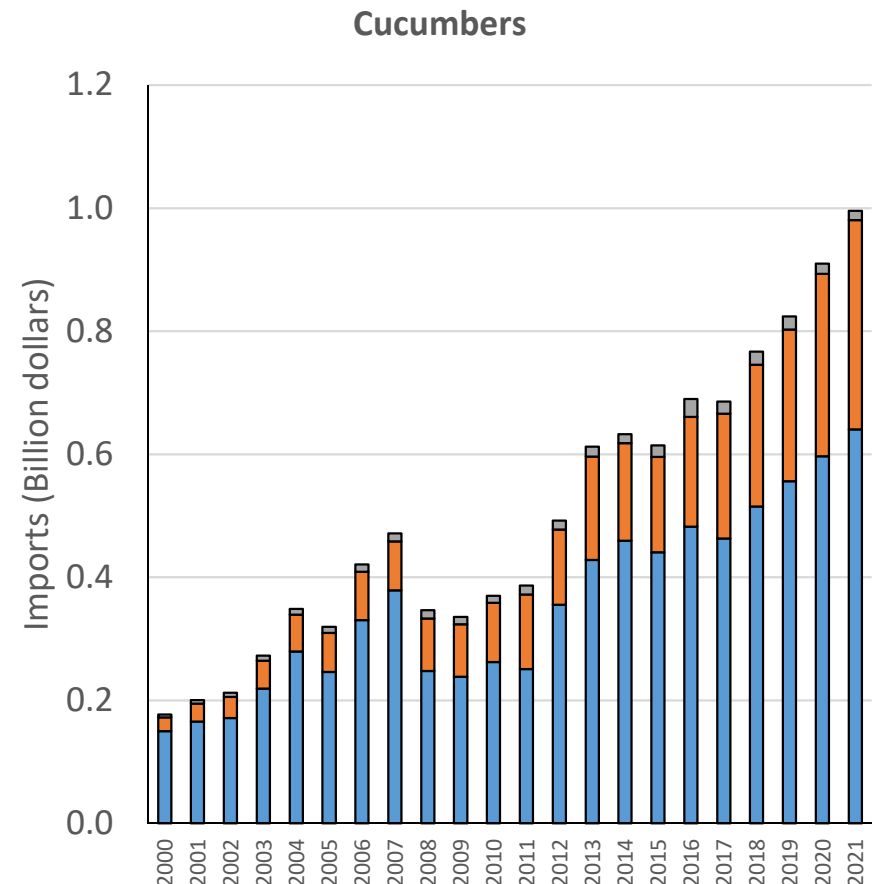
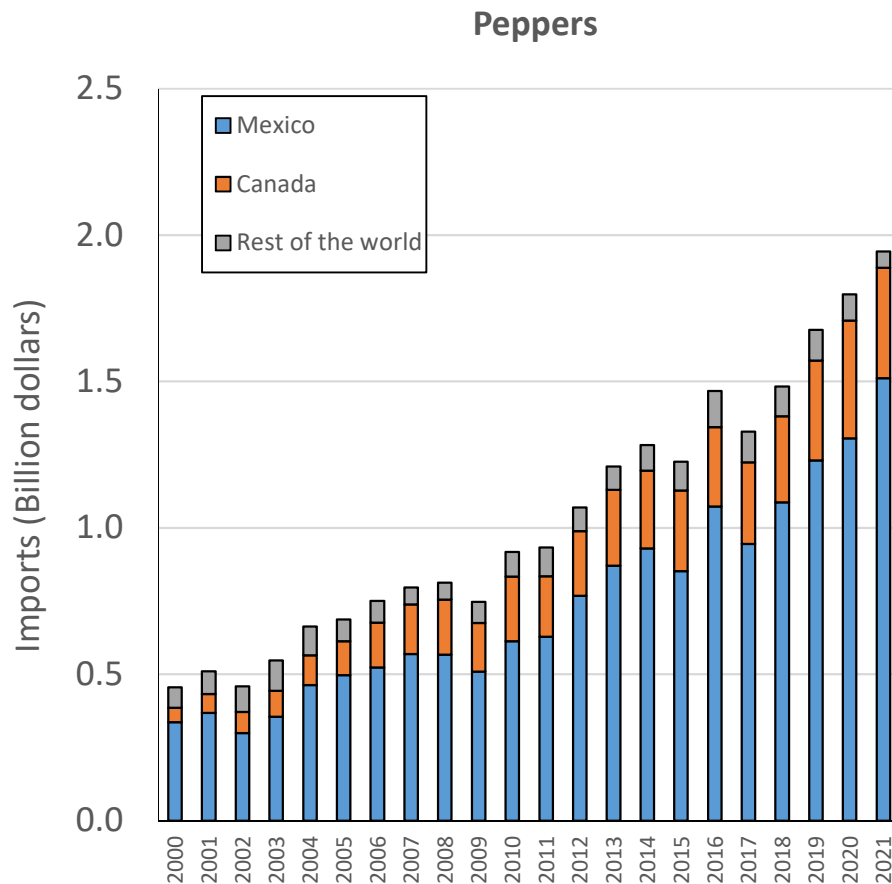


Notes: Average percentage changes shown are 2008-10 vs. 2018-20. Winter months are January-March. Spring months are April-June. Summer months are July-September. Autumn months are October-December.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census data.

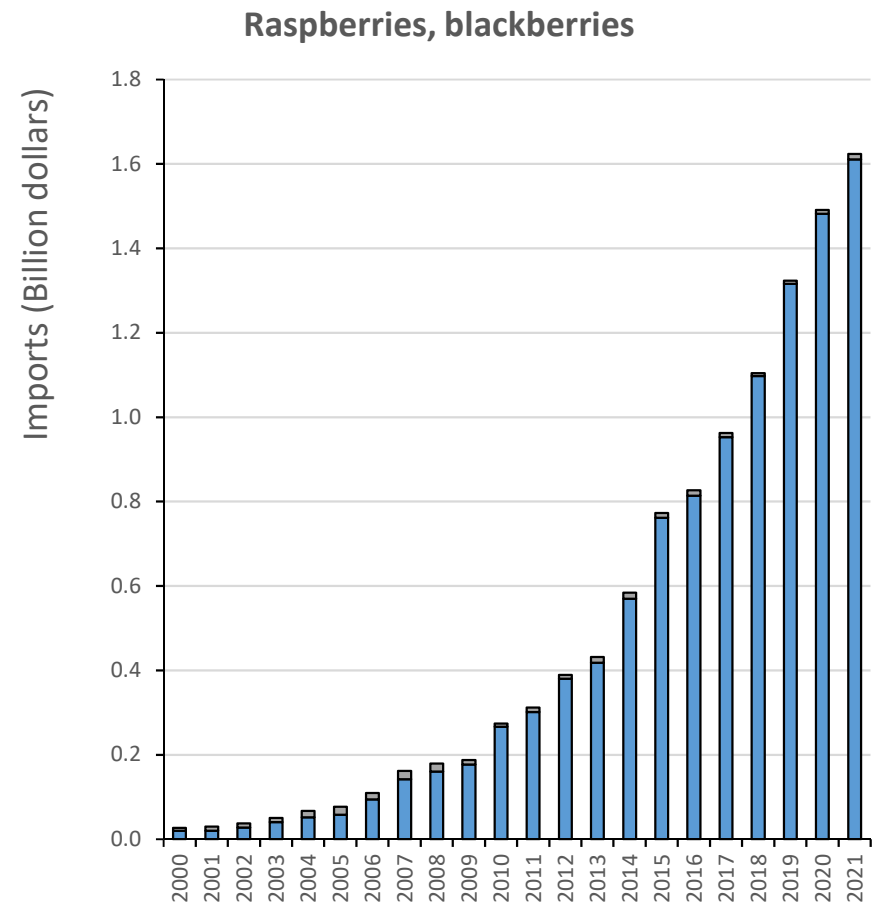
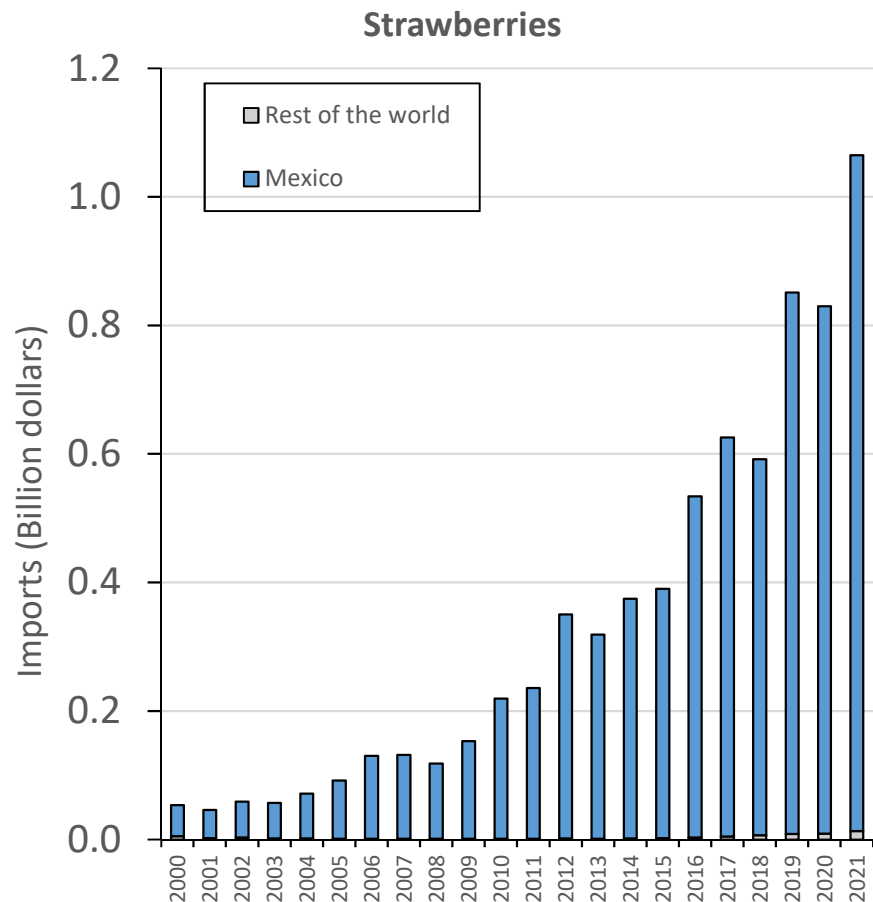


# Imports of peppers and cucumbers



- Industry concerns regarding U.S. imports of certain seasonal perishable products → trade investigations.
- Imports of peppers increased by 108% during the last decade (2011-2021), while cucumbers imports increased by 157%.

# Imports of berries



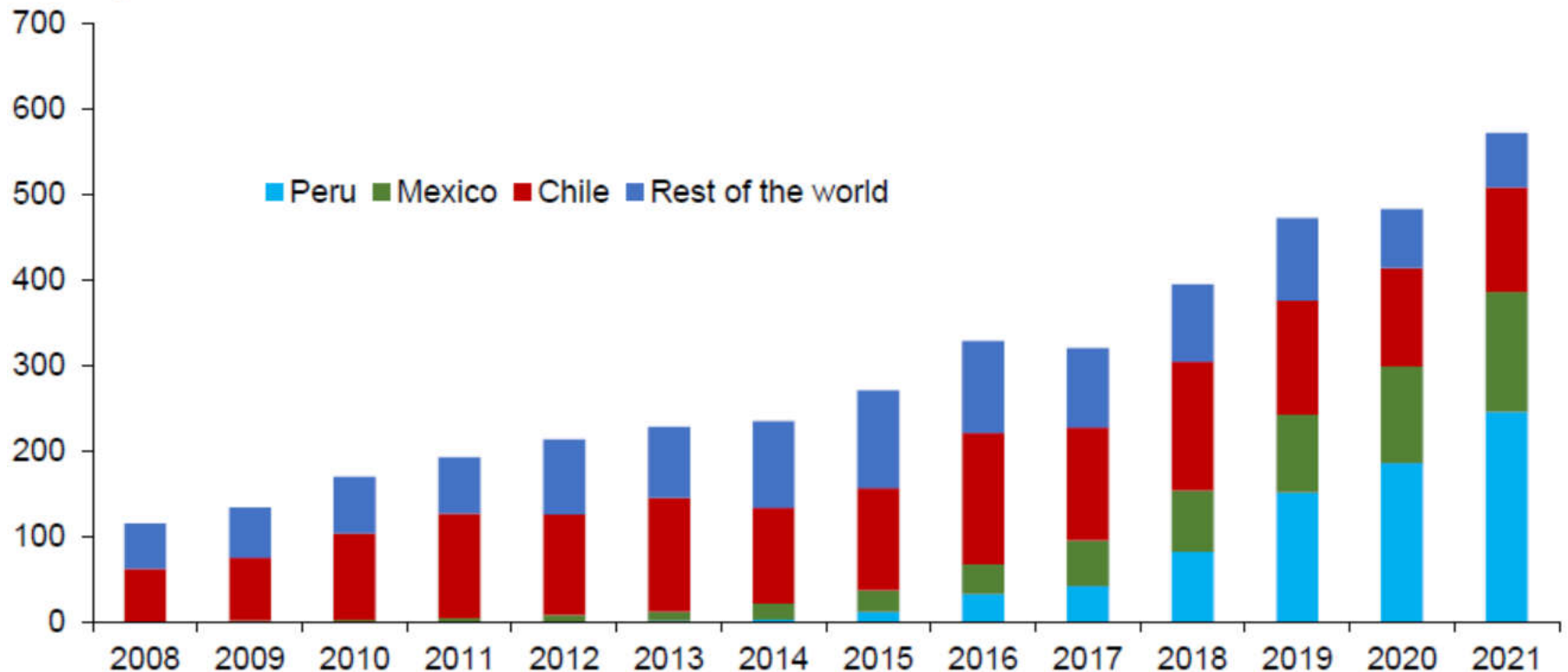
- Industry concerns regarding U.S. imports of certain seasonal perishable products → trade investigations.
- Imports of strawberries increased by 351%% during the last decade (2011-2021), while raspberries & blackberries imports increased by 421%.

# Imports of blueberries have increased, with imports from Peru and Mexico playing an important role

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## Peru's market share in the U.S. blueberry market grows

Million pounds

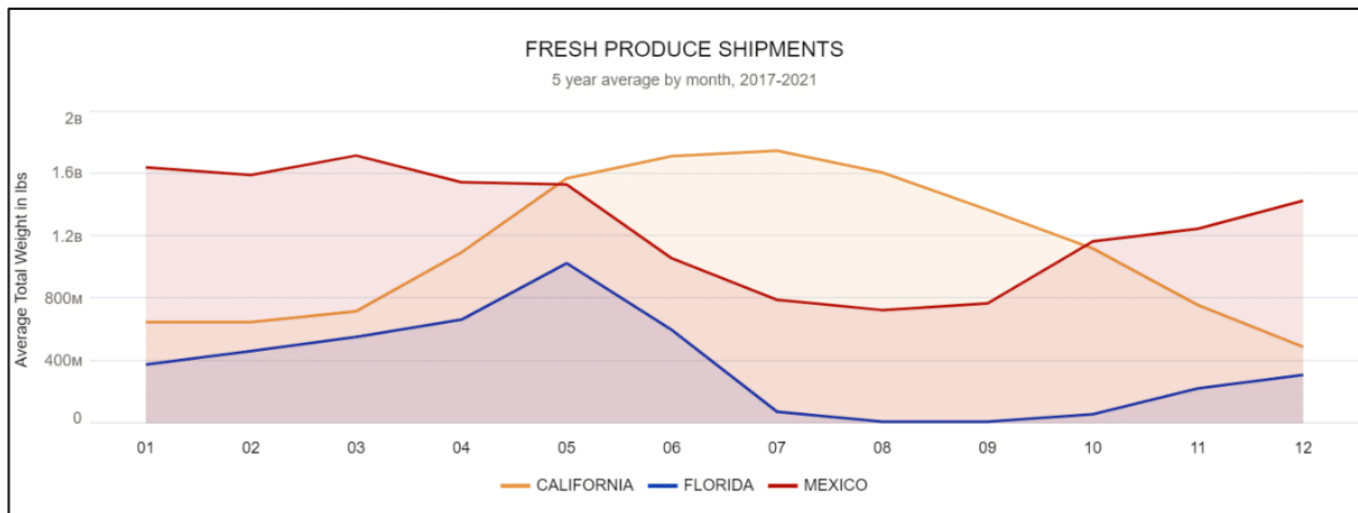


Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census data.

# Florida requests an investigation into imports of seasonal and perishable products

- Mexico's Ag-Exports Impacts on Florida Agriculture Report:
  - Between 2000-2021, specialty crop imports from Mexico increased **596%**
  - Resulted in 10-20% in economic losses for producers in Florida

| Commodity        | Florida Market share loss | Mexico Market share gain | Change in US total supply |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bell peppers     | 73%                       | 110%                     | 56%                       |
| Tomatoes, Rounds | 54%                       | 99%                      | -8%                       |
| Strawberries     | 32%                       | 239%                     | 179%                      |
| Blueberries      | 68%                       | 1,197%                   | 2,954%                    |
| Cucumbers        | 72%                       | 23%                      | 117%                      |
| Squash           | 59%                       | 9%                       | 127%                      |



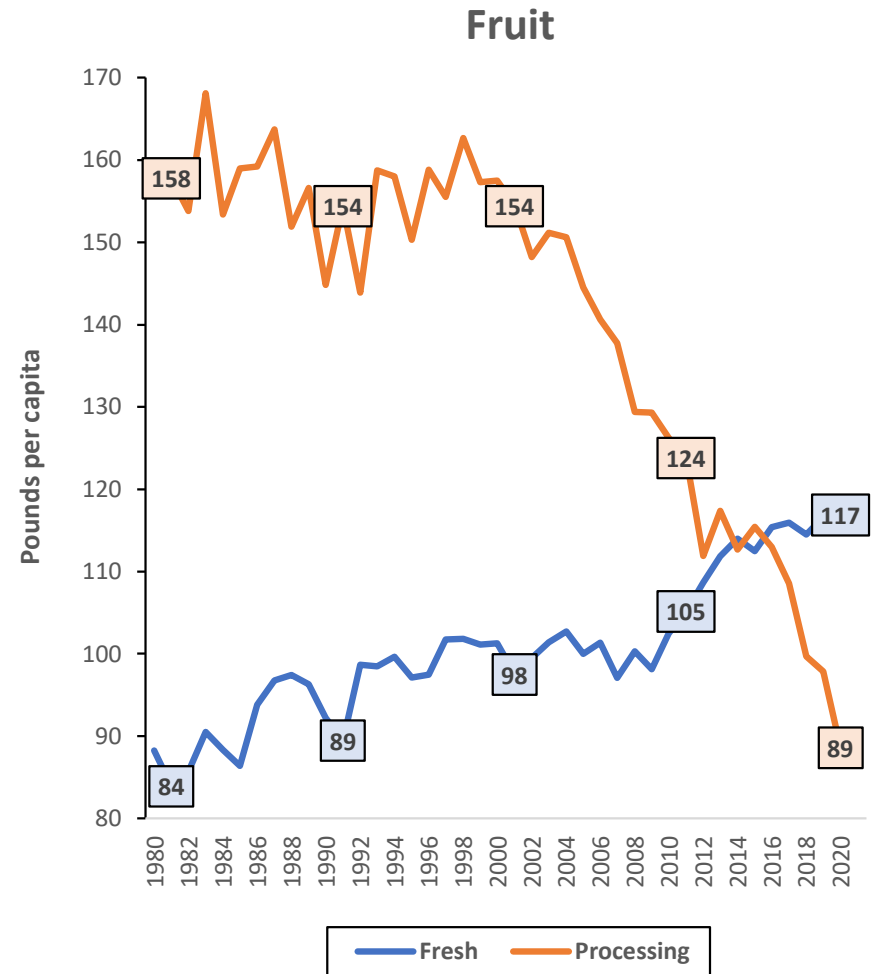
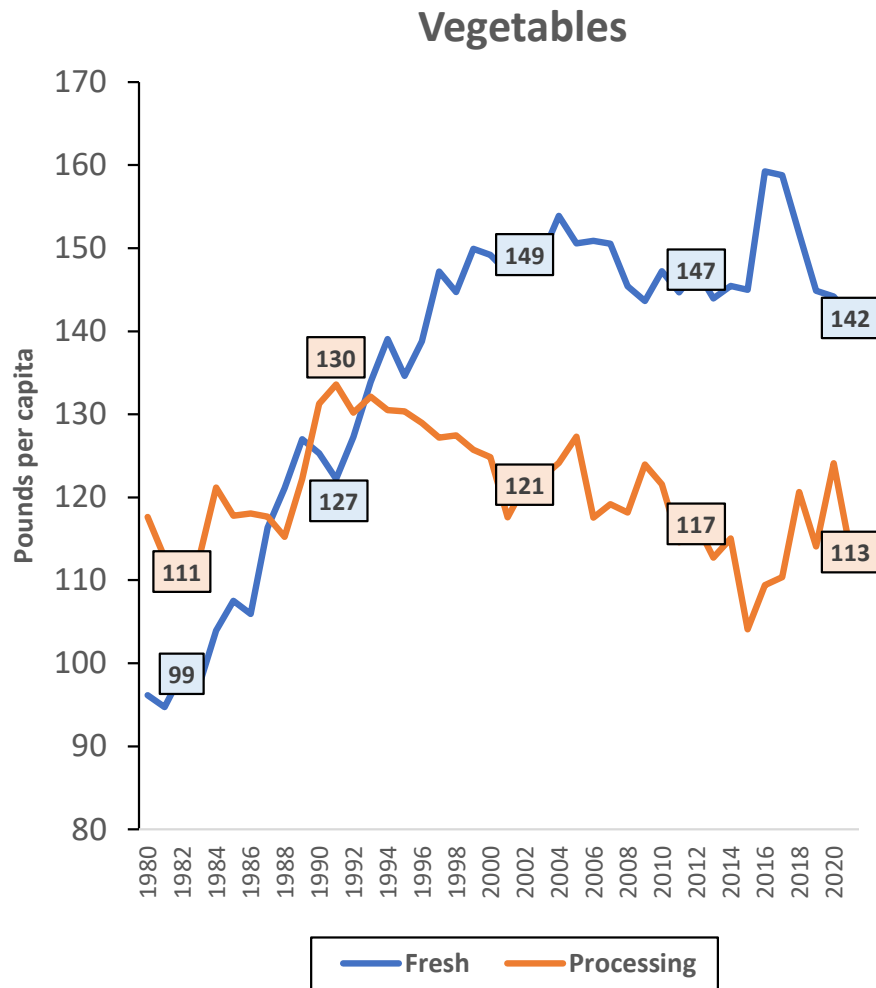
Source: Florida Department of Agriculture. Subject: Mexico's Ag-Exports Impacts on Florida Agriculture. 2022.



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# Industry trends, challenges, and opportunities

# Per-capita availability of processed fruit and vegetables is trending down



Source: USDA-ERS. Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook, 2022 & Fruit Yearbook, 2021

# Challenges

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- Growers under increased pressure
- Retailers increasingly demanding sustainability practices from growers
- Food safety: FSMA – Produce Rule and Food Traceability Proposed Rule
  - Food Traceability List: cucumbers, fresh herbs, leafy greens, melons, peppers, tomatoes, tropical tree fruits, fresh-cut fruit and vegetables

# Challenges

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- Growing most expensive crop ever
  - Moving to crops requiring less input
- Transportation challenges
  - Risks for delays and product rejections

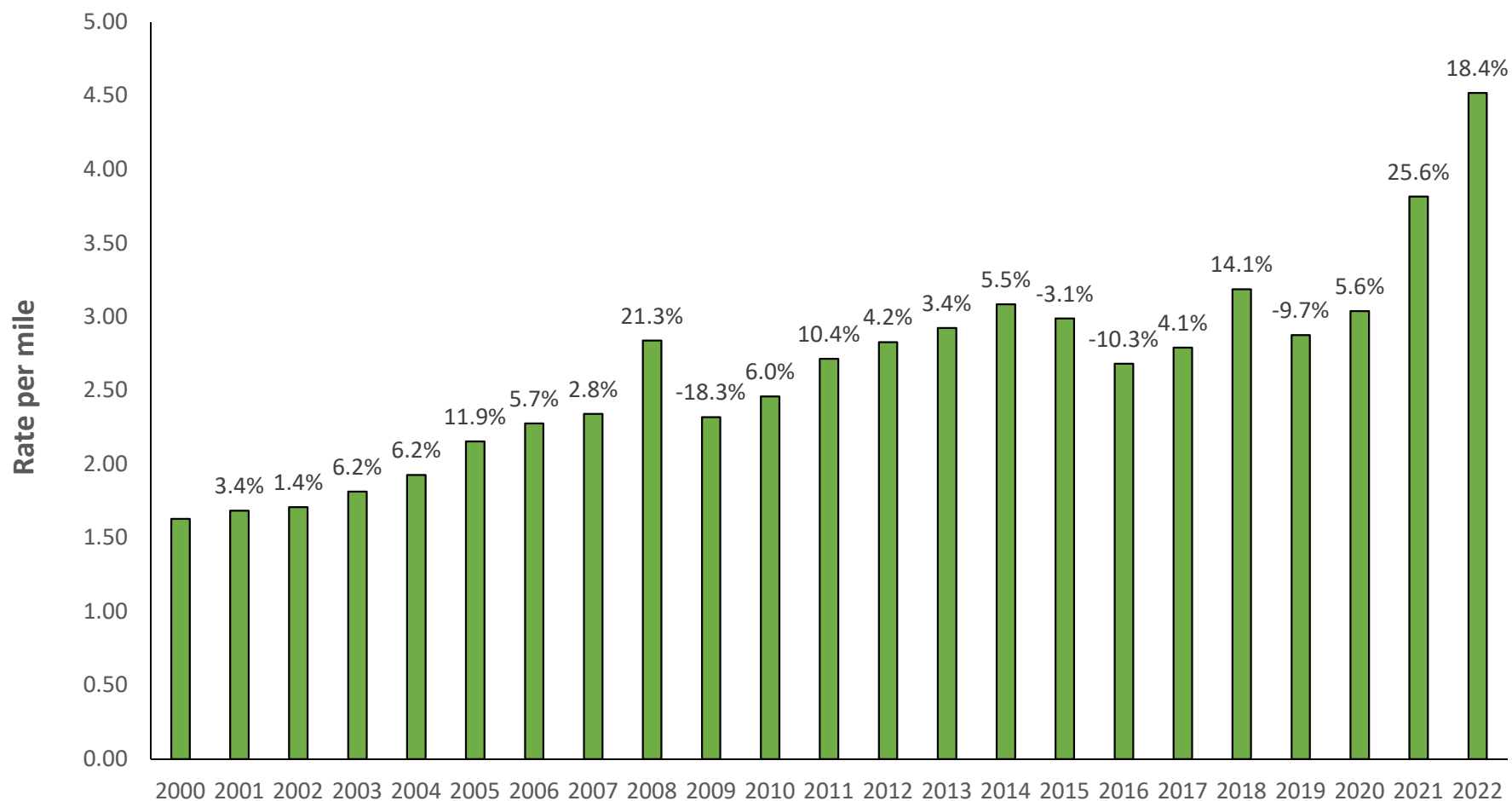
## Suppliers, How Will This Year's Prices Compare to Last Year's?

|                          | 2022 Responses | 2021 Responses |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| More than 5% higher      | 72%            | 20%            |
| Between 1% and 5% higher | 17%            | 43%            |
| About the same           | 7%             | 34%            |
| Between 1% and 5% lower  | 4%             | 3%             |
| More than 5% lower       | 0%             | 0%             |

Source: American Vegetable Grower® magazine's 2022 State of the Industry survey.



# Refrigerated truck rates (YOY % change)



Source: USDA AMS. 2022 Vegetables and Pulses Outlook.

# Produce growers' concerns

American Vegetable Grower, 2022 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey

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## Top Concerns for Vegetable Growers (Percent of growers selecting)



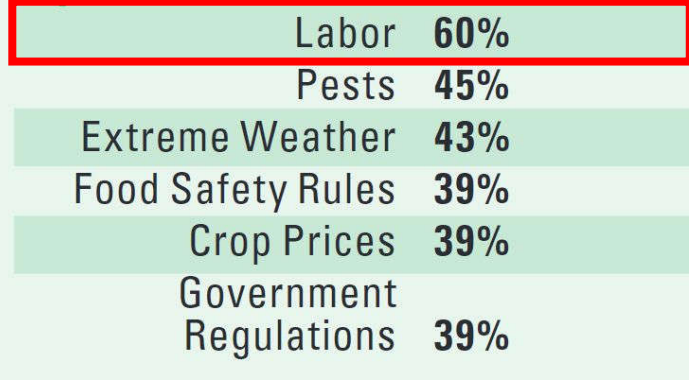
Source: American Vegetable Grower. 2022 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey.

## Top Concerns for Vegetable Growers (Percent of growers selecting)



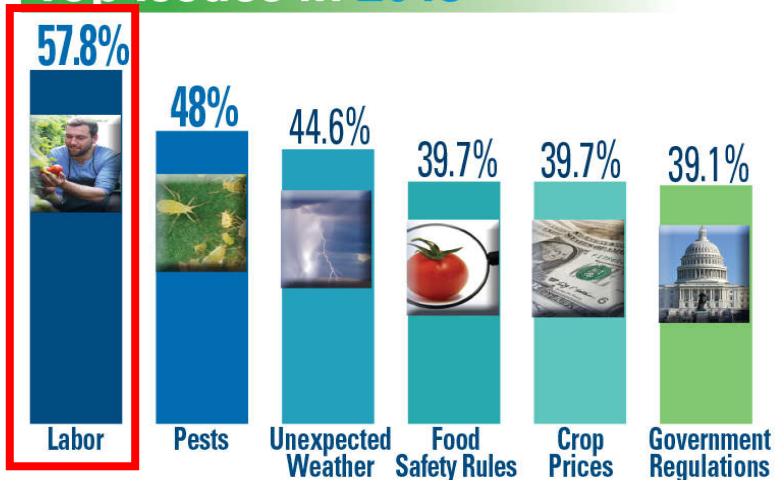
Source: American Vegetable Grower. 2022 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey.

## Here's what you told us were your top six concerns for 2020:



Source: American Vegetable Grower. 2020 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey.

## Top Issues in 2019



Source: American Vegetable Grower. 2019 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey.

## 10 Issues Worrying Growers

Here's how growers ranked the issues concerning them this year



Source: American Vegetable Grower. 2018 State of the Vegetable Industry Survey.

# Challenges and opportunities

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- Droughts and water supply availability
  - Issues in California
  - Implication for fresh produce supply
- Opportunity for Southern states?
  - Migrating specialty crops



## **The Next California**

Phase 1: Investigating Potential in the mid-Mississippi Delta River region

Julia Kurnik, WWF Director, Innovation Startups - Markets



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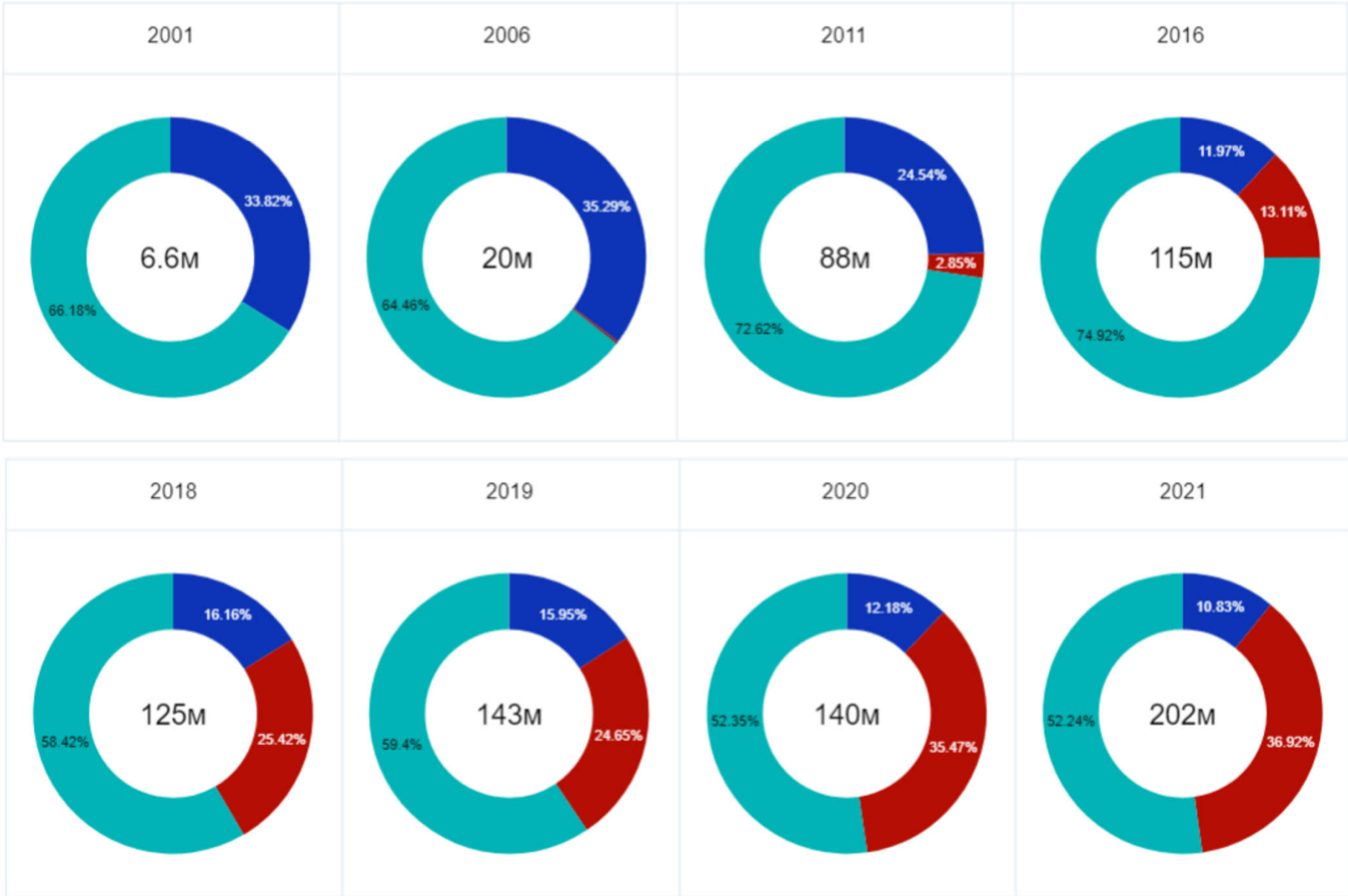
Thank you!

Questions?

# BLUEBERRIES MARKET SHARE

["March", "April", "May"]

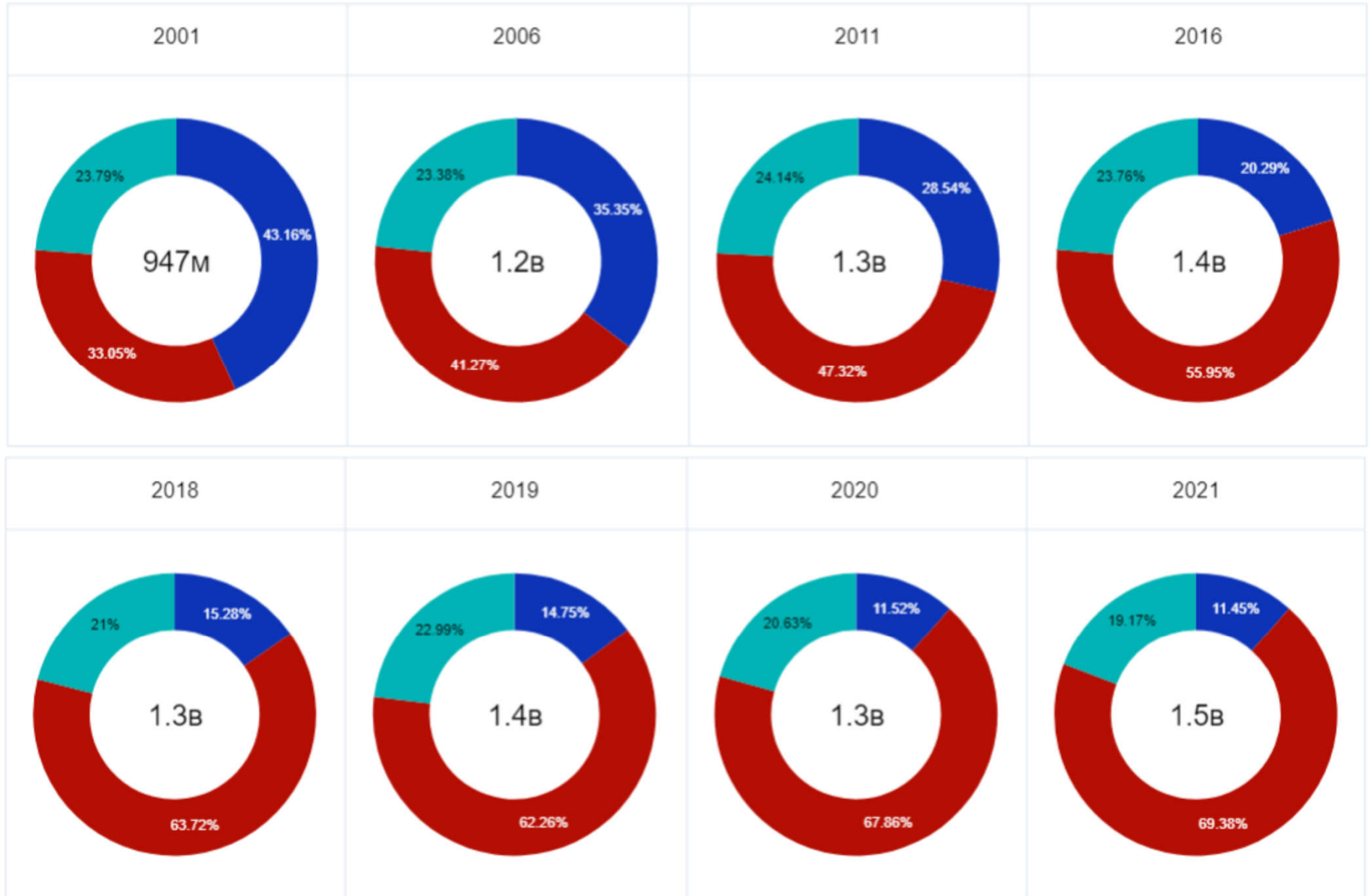
● FLORIDA ● MEXICO ● OTHERS



# PEPPERS BELL TYPE MARKET SHARE

["January", "February", "March", "April", "May", "June", "November", "December"]

● FLORIDA ● MEXICO ● OTHERS



# Inflation numbers are high for fruit and vegetables

| August price up the most vs. July |                           |                         |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Category                          | August price chg. vs July | August Price chg. vs YA |
| Carbonated Beverages              | 5.3%                      | 15.0%                   |
| Fresh Common Fruit                | 5.3%                      | 8.3%                    |
| Ice Cream / Sherbet               | 3.7%                      | 14.1%                   |
| Fresh Vegetables                  | 3.4%                      | 17.1%                   |
| Beef                              | 3.3%                      | 1.5%                    |
| Butter & Margarine                | 3.2%                      | 30.0%                   |

| August down or close to flat vs. July |                           |                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Category                              | August price chg. vs July | August Price chg. vs YA |
| Tropical Fruit                        | -4.4%                     | 16.6%                   |
| Citrus Fruit                          | -2.6%                     | 12.3%                   |
| Frozen Breakfast Food                 | -0.5%                     | 13.1%                   |
| Frozen Dinners & Entrees              | 0.0%                      | 20.7%                   |
| Frozen Pizza                          | 0.0%                      | 17.7%                   |
| Coffee                                | 0.3%                      | 18.6                    |



Note: Excludes any mix effects; Based on releasable UPCs. Source: IRI MULOCC POS data ending 8/28/22. IRI Client Engagement

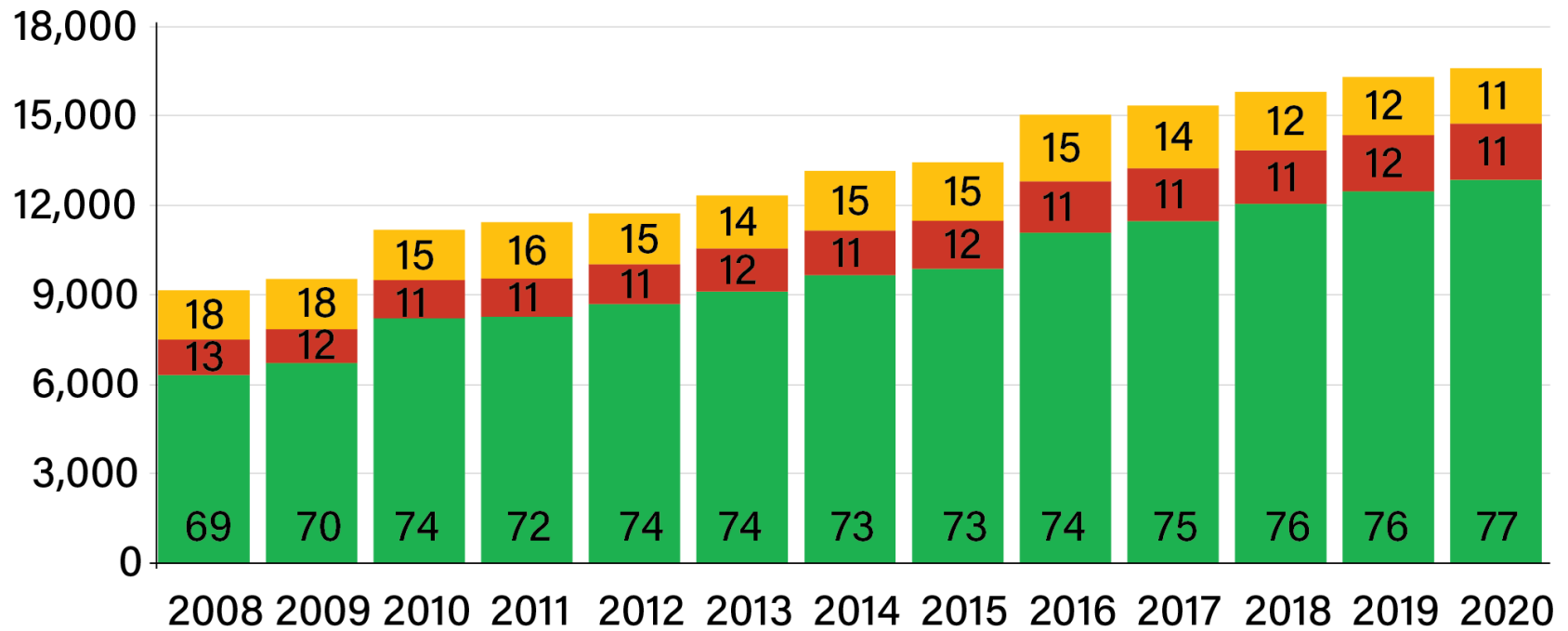
Source: IRI August 2022 Price Check: Tracking Retail Food and Beverage Inflation.



# U.S. fresh vegetable import volume continues steady growth

Million pounds

■ Mexico 
 ■ Canada 
 ■ All other countries



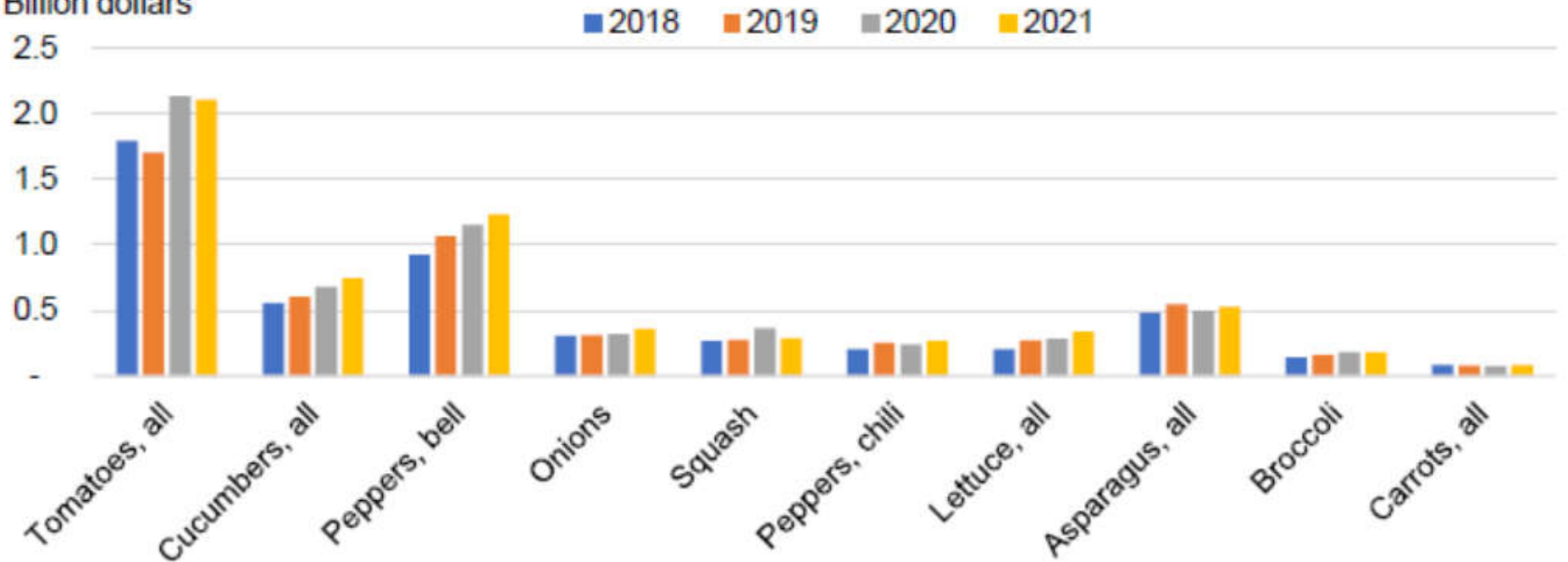
*Numbers inside bars represent share of import volume*

Notes: Fresh vegetables exclude potatoes and pulses (such as dry beans, lentils, peas, e.g.). See July 2021 Vegetables and Pulses Yearbook Tables 12-41 for the fresh vegetables included.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census data.

## Fresh vegetable import values, 2018–21

Billion dollars



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations using U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census data.

# Average Number of Employees by Farm Size

