



# NEWS RELEASE

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## California's Vegetable Value of Utilized Production Shows Slight Decrease in 2020

*USDA NASS released the annual vegetables summary data for the 2020 Crop Year*

**SACRAMENTO, California – February 11, 2021** – The value of California's 2020 utilized vegetable production dropped 0.9% to \$7.68 billion compared to 2019's value of \$7.74 billion according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Pacific Regional Field Office.

Despite the decrease in state's overall total value of utilized production, crops showing an increase included broccoli, cantaloupe, lettuce of all types, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

California fresh market and processing vegetable growers planted 939,700 acres of principal vegetable crops in 2020, down 3% from 2019. Utilized production totaled 433.8 million hundred weight up slightly from 2019's 431.7 million hundred weight.

California leads the nation in vegetable production, accounting for 39% of the U.S. vegetable acreage.

USDA NASS recently posted the Vegetables 2020 Summary for vegetables grown during the 2020 crop year in California and across the U.S. The report includes survey data collected for acreage, production, marketing year price and value collected on an annual basis for 26 vegetable and melon crops in the U.S. Questionnaire content, survey timetables, and survey administration are state specific. Data are gathered by telephone interviews, mail-out/mail-back, faxed questionnaires, and personal interviews.

Family favorites grown in California include artichokes, broccoli, carrots, garlic, tomatoes, and more. For a copy of the full report, visit [Vegetables 2020 Summary](#). Just interested in California? Here are comments on 2020 crops where The Golden State is the largest producer. The data reflects U.S. numbers:

**Artichokes:** Total production in 2020 totaled 812,000 cwt, down 15% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 5,900 acres, down 11% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 5,800 acres, was down 12% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$62.6 million, 16% below the previous season. Utilized production totaled 792,500 cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, artichokes enjoyed a routine spring with strong supplies and steady demand. The March increase could be attributed to consumers pushing the demand for healthy vegetables. The pandemic temporarily impacted labor availability and elevated production costs, but generally favorable weather resulted in good quality and production.

**Broccoli:** Total production in 2020 totaled 15.8 million cwt, down 5% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 100,900 acres, down 4% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 100,300 acres, was also down 4% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$875 million, 3% more than the previous year. Utilized production totaled 15.8 million cwt, of which 15.3 million cwt was for the fresh market and 25,060 tons for processing.

In California, the pandemic caused a variety of changes in the marketplace. Most notably was the decreased demand from the food service industry for broccoli. Growers plowed under broccoli due to limited demand by the hospitality industry.

**Cabbage:** Total production in 2020 totaled 23.7 million cwt, up 6% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 60,600 acres, down 3% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 58,600 acres, was down 3% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$428 million, 16% less than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 23.6 million cwt, of which 19.1 million cwt was for the fresh market and 224,241 tons for processing.

In California, weather during the planting in the fall of 2019 and through head development in 2020 was favorable. No reports of pathogen impact were reported for the crop.

**Cantaloupes:** Total production in 2020 totaled 11.3 million cwt, a slight increase from 2019. Planted areas was estimated at 41,000 acres, down 15% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 40,600 acres, down 15% from 2019. The value of the crop total was \$296 million, an increase of 24% from previous year. The utilized production was 11.3 million cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, lack of rainfall during the spring months and high temperatures during the summer months provided ideal growing conditions for cantaloupes compared to last year.

**Carrots:** Total production in 2020 totaled 31.1 million cwt, down 6% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 69,900 acres, down 4% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 69,700 acres, was down 3% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$716 million, 7% less than the previous year. Utilized production totaled 31.1 million cwt, of which 22.3 million cwt was for the fresh market and 441,787 tons for processing.

In California, the largest producing State, the carrot market was steady through the spring of the year. In the heavily farmed central portion of the Cuyama Valley, where a lot of California's carrots are grown, the water table continued to drop in 2020.

**Cauliflower:** Total production in 2020 totaled 9.0 million cwt, down 11% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 42,500 acres, down 6% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 42,200 acres, was down 7% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$346 million, 25% less than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 8.9 million cwt, of which 8.8 million cwt was for the fresh market and 2,724 tons for processing.

In California, growers have seen dramatic movement of cauliflower during the pandemic. This year has seen generally shrinking volume from the beginning of February, and lower volume than the previous two year since the beginning of March. Pricing is below the prior two years and continues decreasing, although price has not stabilized, the rate of decrease has slowed.

**Celery:** Total production in 2020 totaled 16.1 million cwt, up 2% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 29,200 acres, up 4% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 28,800 acres, increased 2% from the previous year. The value of the crop totaled \$359 million, down 24% from previous year. Utilized production for 2020 totaled 16.1 million cwt, up 2% from 2019.

In California, growers reported higher production but price dropped considerably.

**Garlic:** Total production in 2020 totaled 3.46 million cwt, down 10% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 24,700 acres, unchanged from the previous year. Area harvested, at 24,700 acres, was unchanged from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$264 million, 12% less than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 3.46 million cwt, of which 1.21 million cwt was for the fresh market and 112,385 tons for processing.

In California, producers were tempered by soil borne pathogens that reduced yield in some areas, though overall the growing season experienced favorable weather.

**Honeydew:** Total production in 2020 totaled 2.36 million cwt, down 9% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 7,600 acres, down 25% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 7,600 acres, was also down 25% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$49.2 million, down 11% from the previous season. Utilized production totaled 2.36 million cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, lack of rainfall during the spring months and high temperatures during the summer months provided ample growing conditions for honeydew compared to last year.

**Head lettuce:** Total production in 2020 totaled 40.7 million cwt, down 3% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 114,000 acres, down 2% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 112,900 acres, was down 3% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$1.25 billion, 12% less than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 40.7 million cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, the largest producing State, higher than normal temperatures in the central valley resulted in substantial losses. In the coastal region, warm weather and wildfires affected supplies later in the year. Significant occurrences of crop disease also contributed to a tight market, prompting concerns of shortages in other parts of the country. Some

producers in Arizona and California have allowed some head lettuce to die in the field or to be disced under, due to decreased sales to food service companies.

**Leaf lettuce:** Total production in 2020 totaled 15.6 million cwt, up 25% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 62,900 acres, up 9% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 61,700 acres, was also up 8% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$800 million, 23% more than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 15.6 million cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, some growers did not harvest their fields during the spring in response to market conditions, but demand improved as the year progressed. There was a small amount of heat damage to the crop, but yields were up significantly from the previous year. Quality was reported to be fair and demand was strong enough to keep prices up. However, some producers in Arizona and California have allowed some leaf lettuce to die in the field or to be disced under, due to decreased sales to food service companies.

**Romaine lettuce:** Total production in 2020 totaled 30.3 million cwt, up 11% from the 2019 total. Planted area was estimated at 93,100 acres, up 4% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 91,500 acres, was up 4% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$948 million, 8% more than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 30.3 million cwt, all of which was for the fresh market.

In California, there were quality issues in the late summer crop as instances of Sclerotinia and Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus were found in the Central Coast region. In November, there was a voluntary recall of Romaine lettuce due to a potential outbreak of E.coli. Overall, yields were up from a year ago. Some producers in Arizona and California have allowed Romaine lettuce to die in the field or to be disced under, due to decreased sales to food service companies.

**Onions:** Total production in 2020 totaled 75.2 million cwt, up 8% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 134,700 acres, up 2% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 132,800 acres, was up 3% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$878 million, 12% less than the previous year. Utilized production totaled 73.5 million cwt, of which 49.5 million cwt was for the fresh market and 1.20 million tons were for processing.

In California, the largest producing State, growers reported the summer being too hot too early. Later in the summer there wasn't enough sun when wildfires blanketed the state in smoke for months.

**Bell peppers:** Total production in 2020 totaled 11.7 million cwt, up 1% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 38,100 acres, up 1% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 37,100 acres, was up 1% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$479 million, 11% less than the previous year. Utilized production totaled 11.7 million cwt, of which 8.22 million cwt was for the fresh market and 171,808 tons for processing.

In California, the summer turned very hot early, which quickly turned bad as fires ravaged through large portions of the state burning cropland and producing a thick layer of smoke blocking the sun for months. Some producers had to divert peppers intended for fresh market to processors as state lockdowns caused stoppages in the supply chain.

**Spinach:** Total production in 2020 totaled 7.23 million cwt, down 24% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 56,800 acres, down 14% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 56,200 acres, was also down 14% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$439 million, 28% less than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 7.23 million cwt, of which 6.45 million cwt was for the fresh market and 39,204 tons for processing.

In California, the largest producing State, the coastal regions experienced damaging cold temperatures in early spring, bringing yields down below last year. Acreage decreased after some growers responded to a drop in demand by plowing under their fields.

**Sweet potatoes:** Total production in 2020 totaled 30.7 million cwt, down 4% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 158,000 acres, up 7% from the previous year. Area harvested, at 156,800 acres, was up 7% from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$726 million, 10% more than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 30.6 million cwt, of which 23.9 million cwt was for the fresh market and 331,638 tons for processing.

**Tomatoes:** Total production in 2020 totaled 241 million cwt, up 1% from 2019. Planted area was estimated at 280,000 acres, down 1% from the previous year. Area harvested, estimated at 272,900 acres, was down slightly from 2019. The value of the crop totaled \$1.66 billion, 4% more than the previous season. Utilized production totaled 239 million cwt, of which 12.6 million cwt was for the fresh market and 11.3 million tons for processing.

In California, there were no major issues during planting, but higher than average temperatures in late spring affected early crop yields. Inconsistent weather patterns throughout the growing season prompted short interruptions in the flow of

ripe tomatoes. Wildfires that raged through the state in late summer and early fall slowed the processing tomato harvest. Crop quality varied by region and disease pressure was low. Due to a lack of rain, water availability continued to be a concern.

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