



Agricultural Issues Center
University of California

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Commodity Profile: Artichokes

*Crystel Stanford, Undergraduate Factotum
Agricultural Issues Center
University of California
agissues@ucdavis.edu*

Overview

In the United States, artichokes are grown almost exclusively in California, with about three-fourths of the production originating in the Castroville area in Monterey County. The artichoke is classified as a thistle and belongs to the same family as the sunflower (*Compositae*). Artichokes are grown for their flower heads and are harvested in the immature stage. Artichokes are a low-calorie food, with only about 25 calories per medium artichoke. They are full of potassium, folate, magnesium, and vitamin C. Artichoke hearts (the bottom portion of a trimmed artichoke) are considered a delicacy.

Demand

Artichokes are sold as fresh, frozen, and canned. Per capita retail consumption of fresh artichokes increased from 0.2 of a pound in 1960 to 0.6 of a pound in 2001 (Figure 1). Consumption peaked in 1994 at 0.7 of a pound.

The United States is a net exporter of artichokes. Canada has been the most significant export destination for U.S. artichokes since at least 1989. In 2002, Canada received \$2.9 million (95 percent) of U.S. artichoke exports that had a total value of \$3.1 million. The United States also shipped artichokes to six other countries in 2002. In order of importance, they were Spain, Japan, Mexico, Aruba, Taiwan and Germany. Of the six, only Japan and Mexico have been regular destinations.

Supply

U.S. artichoke production is all in California (USDA production data). In 2002, California produced 943,000 cwt of artichokes on 8,200 acres (Table 1). Both of these numbers were lower than in 1999, when production peaked at 1.125 million cwt from 9,800 acres. In general, production and acreage have declined since 1992, while prices have increased.

In 1992, the price for artichokes (in 1996 dollars) was at its lowest, at \$42.90 per cwt. Prices rose almost continuously until peaking in 1997 at \$77.98 per cwt. Since 1997, prices have fluctuated around an average of \$61.28 per cwt. In 2002, the price was \$63.98 per cwt.

The United States imported \$1.82 million of artichokes in 2002. Artichokes imported from countries with which the U.S. maintains normal trade relations face an 11.3 percent tariff. Countries with which the U.S. has granted preferential status are allowed to import without the tariff. The United States only imported from four countries, with most artichokes coming from Mexico. In 2002, Mexico sent \$1.77 million of artichokes to the United States. The other three trading partners were Spain, Chile and Peru, which together accounted for \$49,087 (2.7 percent) of imports. Italy is the world's number one producer of artichokes, but the U.S. did not import from Italy in 2002. For the first time since at least 1989, the United States did not receive any artichokes from Colombia in 2002, once the second largest source of artichoke imports for the United States.

Sources

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United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistical Service. Commodity Reports. Available at: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/estindx.htm>

United States International Trade Commission. The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (2002). Available at: <http://dataweb.usitc.gov/scripts/tariff/TOC.HTML>

Tables and figures

Table 1: U.S. (California) Artichoke Acreage, Production, and Value, 1992-2002

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Acres Harvested	9,600	8,300	8,500	8,900	8,900	9,300	9,700	9,800	8,800	8,000	8,200
Production (1,000 cwt)	1,014	913	1,015	819	890	930	873	1,125	1,012	1,000	943
Price (per cwt)	39.40	50.10	55.70	75.70	73.50	79.50	70.60	67.00	60.30	58.60	70.80
Price per cwt (1996)	42.90	53.27	58.01	77.17	73.50	77.98	68.41	64.02	56.41	53.56	63.98
Prod Value (\$1,000)	43,447	45,762	61,577	61,965	65,416	73,910	61,633	75,395	61,021	58,559	66,764

(Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service)

Figure 1: Per Capita Retail Consumption of Artichokes, 1960-2001

(Source: USDA Economic Research Service)

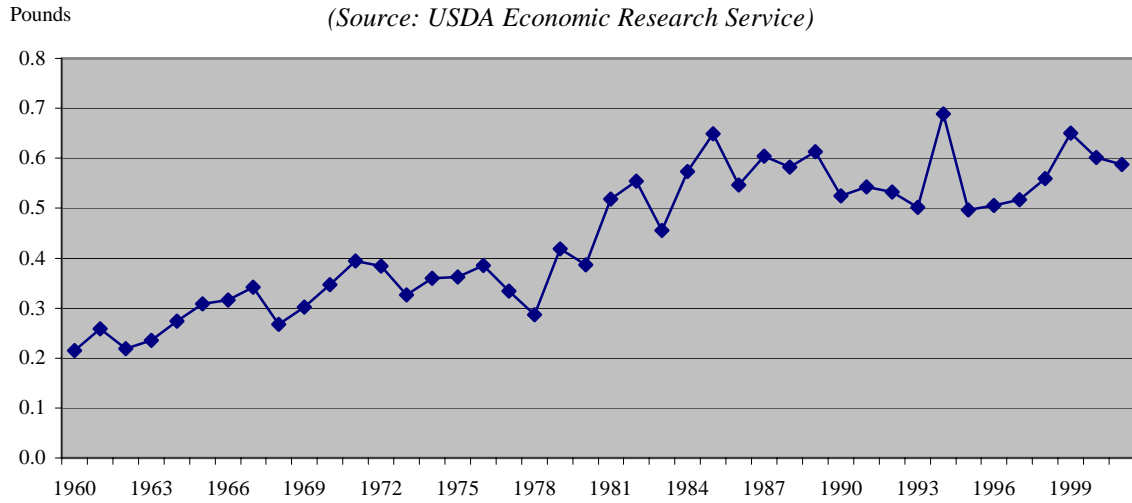


Figure 2: U.S. Artichoke Trade, 1989-2002

(Source: U.S. Customs Service)

