

Colorado's Produce Industry

Sustainability isn't just a new buzzword in Colorado. Our farmers have been committed to enhancing Colorado's use of natural resources for generations. Our farmers want to make sure they can provide the finest quality fruits and vegetables today and in the future. This farsighted commitment has grown our produce industry to over a third of billion dollars of the finest quality fruits and vegetables available. Sustainability isn't just a new word in Colorado's produce industry. Colorado's produce growers have been growing fruits and vegetables on their lands for over 130 years!

Colorado's produce industry has 10 products ranked in top ten producing states in the

Colorado's Nationally Ranked Produce			
3 rd	Head lettuce	7 th	Summer potatoes
5 th	Fall Potatoes	7 th	Dry edible beans
6 th	Onions	7 th	Cabbage
6 th	Sweet Corn	7 th	Pears
6 th	Cantaloupe	8 th	Peaches

nation. Our growing conditions combine to help our farmers grow and ship world class produce to meet the US and world's consumer preferences.

Colorado's farmers and orchards are supplying conventional and organic produce for the world. Beyond our

nationally ranked production, Colorado is proud to provide a full range produce including apples, cherries, spinach, broccoli, and in addition to a complete range of organic produce.

The state of Colorado is committed to building on our 130 years of produce farming. Together, we can build upon this legacy of excellence in world-class fruits and vegetables.

Colorado's famous climate of winter snows, over 300 days of bright sun and cool summer nights combine to make Colorado's fruits and vegetables some of the finest and tastiest in the world. Our use of precision irrigation allows our farmers optimal control of watering our crops. Colorado's cold winter days and nights naturally cleanse our farm soil of pests that other regions must attack with pesticides as well as providing the perfect growing environment for crops. In addition, our growing season makes Colorado a primary supplier for many of these crops when other states are not harvesting.

Colorado's top 10 in 2007	
Value in US\$ millions	
Potatoes	157.8
Onions	46.0
Spinach	41.5
Carrots and other veg.	28.1
Tree Fruits	28.1
Dry Beans	24.3
Sweet Corn	15.2
Lettuce	13.7
Cabbage	11.6
Cantaloupe	5.1

Colorado's perfect climate for many fruits and vegetables is supported by Colorado State University. Here, top researchers have been breeding and perfecting vegetable crops for Colorado's unique growing season and climate. [The University's Specialty Crops Center](#) is a partnership with the Colorado Department of Agriculture to provide grants and technology assistance to Colorado's fruit and vegetable growers. This brings new crops to Colorado farms -- helping farmers grow both conventional and organic products.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture works with the United States Department of Agriculture to perform [inspections on produce](#). These inspections determine grade, size, and quality on more than 2.1 billion pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, annually.

Inspection of fruits and vegetables provides protection to the consumer as well as the agricultural industry. It assures that the commodities inspected meet stringent quality guidelines prior to shipment

Our teams utilize internationally recognized standards for grading and phytosanitary certification. Importing countries may rest assured that all necessary requirements are met.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture is the in-state partner with the USDA for the USDA Fresh Produce Audit Verification Program ([GAP/GHP](#)). With the increasing focus on good agricultural practices to verify that farms are producing fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible, third party audits are being utilized by the retail and food service industry to verify their suppliers are in conformance to specific agricultural best practices. Since 1999, AMS, in partnership with state departments of agriculture, offers a voluntary, audit based program that verifies adherence to the recommendations made in the Food and Drug Administration's [Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables](#).

The world buys produce from Colorado! Colorado's produce is shipped throughout the US and to over 115 countries around the world. Mexico represents the largest international market for seeds, edible beans, grains as well as our fresh produce including potatoes, onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, watermelon, squash, spinach and split peas.