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Chapter 1. Commercial Vegetable Production in Florida[1]

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Vegetable production remains a tremendous industry for Florida in terms of acreage and value. The 2024 value of production for major berries, spring potatoes, vegetable crops, and watermelons totaled $3.0 billion in Florida. Growing seasons are well defined by the peninsular geography, allowing Florida to serve as the main vegetable supplier to the United States during late fall, winter, and early spring months. Although more than 40 vegetable crops are commercially planted in the state, Florida ranks in the top three for production value of tomato, bell pepper, snap bean, squash, sweet corn, watermelon, cabbage, cucumber, and strawberry (Table 1).

The objective of this publication is to provide updated information on crop cultivars, pesticide labels, and certain practices for vegetable production in Florida. Suggested practices are guidelines for growers to plan farm activities and are always subject to review using the latest scientific data available.

Web Links to Additional Information on Vegetable Production Topics

UF/IFAS Extension provides information through Ask IFAS/EDIS at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/. Below is a partial list of Ask IFAS publications and other resources pertaining to vegetable production for further information beyond the *Vegetable Production Handbook of Florida*.

Vegetable Crop Production

Complete *Vegetable Production Handbook*: https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV292

FDACS/UF-IFAS Florida Farm to School Partnership: https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/farm_to_school

"Introduction to Organic Crop Production": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV118

"Row Covers for Commercial Vegetable Culture in Florida": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV201

"Value Added Agriculture: Is It Right for Me?": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FE638

Fertility and Irrigation

"Commercial Vegetable Fertilization Principles": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV009

"Controlled-Release and Slow-Release Fertilizers as Nutrient Management Tools": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS1255

"Cover Crop Benefits for South Florida Commercial Vegetable Producers": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/SS461

"Drip Irrigation: The BMP Era—An Integrated Approach to Water and Fertilizer Management for Vegetables Grown with Plasticulture": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS172

"Soil and Fertilizer Management for Vegetable Production in Florida": https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV101

Postharvest Quality and Handling Resources

Ask IFAS on Postharvest and Handling: https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/postharvest

Postharvest Technology: https://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/

UF/IFAS Postharvest Programs and Information: https://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu/postharvest/

Marketing and Regulatory Resources

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS): https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Marketing-and-Development

FoodData Central Database: https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/

National Agricultural Statistics Service: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/index.php

National Organic Program:
https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program

U.S. Grade Standards for Fruits and Vegetables:
https://www.ams.usda.gov/standards

Food Safety Resources

Ask IFAS on Food Safety:
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/food_safety

CDC: Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases:
https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/divisions-offices/about-dfwed.html

"The Food Safety Modernization Act and the FDA Facility Registration Program":
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FS231

"Food Safety on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices—an Overview":
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FS135

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA):
https://www.fda.gov/food/guidance-regulation-food-and-dietary-supplements/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma

Fumigation

"Maximizing the Efficacy of Soil Fumigant Applications for Raised-Bed Plasticulture Systems of Florida":
https://doi.org/10.32473/edis-hs1169-2010

Pesticide Safety

Ask IFAS on Pesticide Safety and Handling:
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/pesticide-safety

"Minimizing Honey Bee Exposure to Pesticides":
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1027

Pest Management

Ask IFAS on Florida Nematode Management: https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/nematode_management

Ask IFAS on Pest Management:
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/pest_management

Ask IFAS on Weed Management:
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/weed-management

Table 1. Vegetable production acreage and value in Florida.

Crop	Planted Acres[1]	Value (million US$)[1]	US Rank[2]
Tomato	30,000	532.2	2
Strawberry	17,000	714.4	2
Bell pepper	11,500	136.8	2
Sweet corn	45,000	187.6	1
Potato	17,000	106.2	12
Snap bean	33,000	95.3	1
Watermelon	24,000	186.8	1
Squash	8,000	57.8	2
Cabbage	5,600	51.2	2
Cucumber	17,200	61.1	1

Sources:
[1] USDA-NASS. 2025. *2025 State Agricultural Overview—Florida*. Quick Stats Database.
[2] USDA-ERS. 2026. "Cash Receipts by Commodity, State Ranking, 2024, Nominal (Current Dollars)." Farm Income and Wealth Statistics. Last updated February 5, 2026.

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