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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. Including vegetables, melons, potatoes, and strawberries, production occurred on approximately 251,011 acres and generated more than $1.34 billion in gross sales in 2016, which ranks second among all the states. Growing seasons are well defined by the peninsular geography, allowing Florida to serve as the main vegetable supplier during late fall, winter, and early spring months to the United States. Although more than 40 vegetable crops are commercially planted in the state, Florida ranks in the top three on 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 the Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) found at https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu. Below is a partial list of EDIS articles pertaining to vegetable production for further information beyond the *Vegetable Production Handbook of Florida*.

Vegetable Crop Production

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

***Seed Quality and Seeding Technology*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV103

***Transplant Production*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV104

***Introduction to Organic Crop Production*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV118

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

***Farm to School*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_farm_to_school

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***Row Covers for Growth Enhancement*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV201

Fertility and Irrigation

***Commercial Vegetable Fertilization Principles*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV009

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

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

***Cover Crops*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/AA217

***Principles and Practices of Irrigation Management for Vegetables*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV107

***Drip Irrigation in the BMP Era*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS172

Postharvest Quality and Handling Resources

UF/IFAS Postharvest Quality & Technology: https://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu/postharvest/

UF/IFAS EDIS (Electronic Data Information Source): https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_postharvest

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

Marketing and Regulatory Resources

Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS): https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Marketing-and-Development

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

National Agricultural Statistics Service: https://www.nass.usda.gov/fl/

National Nutrient Database: https://www.ars.usda.gov

National Organic Program: https://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm

Food Safety Resources

***Food Safety on the Farm: An Overview of Good Agricultural Practices*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FS135

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

UF/IFAS Food Safety: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_food_safety/

Good Agricultural Practices Training: http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/

CDC: Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases: https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dfwed/

FDA: US Food and Drug Administration: https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/default.htm

Fumigation

***Maximizing the Efficacy of Soil Fumigant Applications for Raised-Bed Plasticulture Systems in Florida*:** https://journals.flvc.org/edis/article/view/118553

Pesticide Safety

***Pesticide Provisions of the Florida Agricultural Worker Safety Act (FAWSA)*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI078

***Pesticide Safety*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV108

***Interpreting PPE Statements on Pesticide Labels*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI137

***Honeybees and Pesticides*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1027

Pest Management

***Vegetable IPM. Integrated Disease Management for Vegetable Crops*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PP111

***Florida Nematode Management Guide*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/nematode_management

***Weed Management*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV113

***Insects in Vegetables*:** https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_vegetable_pest_insects

Table 1. Vegetable production acreage and value in Florida.

Crop	Planted Acres	Value (million US$)	US Rank
Tomato	30,000	382.2	1
Strawberry	10,800	449.7	2
Bell pepper	13,500	209.7	2
Sweet corn	37,600	160.0	2
Potato	29,300	117.0	11
Snap bean	28,200	105.6	1
Watermelon	22,500	123.3	1
Squash	6,000	30.0	2
Cabbage	8,500	49.4	3
Cucumber	11,000	66.0	1
Source: Vegetables—2015–2016 summary, NASS, USDA.			