

1996 NA 248,174 NA 61,381 155,744 NA

Year	Snap Beans	Celery	Eggplant	Radishes
1993	NA	NA	3,960	NA
1994	NA	NA	3,334	NA
1995	NA	NA	3,684	NA
1996	NA	NA	3,086	NA

Source: Agroplan

As indicated in the table, data are not available for several of the commodities specified. However, most of these commodities are readily available for sale, which, combined with the low level of imports, indicates sufficient production. Venezuela produces and consumes a large amount of fresh corn, but it is rarely consumed as "corn on the cob". Rather, fresh corn is most often shelled and prepared as "cachapas", or fresh sweet corn pancakes. Venezuelan farmers also produce large quantities of strawberries (enough to meet demand for fresh and processing consumption), snap beans, celery and radishes. The absence of imports of celery, green peppers, eggplant and radishes combined with reasonable market prices indicates that domestic production meets demand. In contrast, blueberries are practically absent from the market, and there is no

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information on production or imports.

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Because it can meet most of its needs with domestic production, Venezuela does not import large volumes of fresh vegetables or berries. Indeed, some of the commodities specified in the referenced cable are not imported at all. The import value of most of the requested commodities is in the US\$ 10,000 range. The exception is tomatoes, which is imported in relatively high volumes and values (US\$ 1.4 million in 1995).

TABLE 2: VENEZUELA - IMPORTS OF SELECTED VEGETABLES AND BERRIES (MT)

Year	Sweet Corn	Tomatoes	Straw-berries	Green Peppers	Carrots	Blue-berries
1993	137	9,549	49	0	260	NA
1994	22	2,595	58	0	46	NA
1995	1	2,752	8	0	28	NA
1996*	1	0	1	0	0	NA

Year	Snap Beans	Celery	Eggplant	Radishes
1993	NA	0	0	0
1994	NA	0	0	0
1995	NA	0	0	0
1996*	NA	0	0	0

* January - April 1996
Source: Agroplan

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In 1993, Venezuela entered a prolonged economic recession. In 1994, the GOV imposed strict foreign exchange controls, which severely and negatively impacted agricultural imports, especially those considered nonessential. Those controls were relaxed in April 1996. This, plus the economic recovery, indicate that import volumes will likely rebound.

The United States is a regular supplier of a variety of horticultural products to Venezuela. Although its market share varies from year to year by commodity, the U.S. remains an important supplier. Major competitors include Argentina, Canada, and Colombia.

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TABLE 3: VENEZUELA - SELECTED VEGETABLES AND BERRIES,
1993-1995 AVERAGE U.S. AND COMPETITOR MARKET SHARES

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Commodity	U.S. Market Share (%)	Major Competitor	Major Competitor's Share (%)
Sweet corn	52	Canada	58
Tomatoes	0	Colombia	100
Strawberries	15	Colombia	47
Green peppers	0	none	0
Carrots	16	Argentina	72
Blueberries	na	na	na
Snap beans	na	na	na
Celery	0	none	0
Eggplant	0	none	0
Radishes	0	none	0

na = not available

Source: Agroplan, Government of Venezuela trade data

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Import regulations

Importers require an official sanitary certificate from the country of origin and a Venezuelan phytosanitary import permit issued by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Fresh vegetable exporters and importers should consult the Venezuelan Industrial Norms Committee (COVENIN) regulations concerning the guidelines and testing protocols for vegetables and berries before doing business in Venezuela.

Tariffs

Fresh vegetable and berry imports from Andean Pact countries (Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia) enter duty free. Imports from all other countries are subject to a 15 percent ad valorem duty.

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for U.S. produced vegetables and berries exist, but are limited. As noted previously, local production can meet most demand, and imports are a small percentage of production. (Tomatoes, the exception, are

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supplied primarily from Colombia.) In addition, about 70 percent of the Venezuelan population lives in some degree of poverty, and they find many high value products out of reach. The good news is that Venezuela is recovering from its prolonged economic recession. If conditions continue to improve, consumer demand for high value products will increase.

As the import statistics prove, some opportunities do exist. Venezuela has a number of horticultural product traders who are well plugged into the U.S. market information network, and who regularly source product from the U.S. At this time, post does not believe that a survey trip would be cost effective.

END OF REPORT

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