

Commodity Highlight: Pumpkins

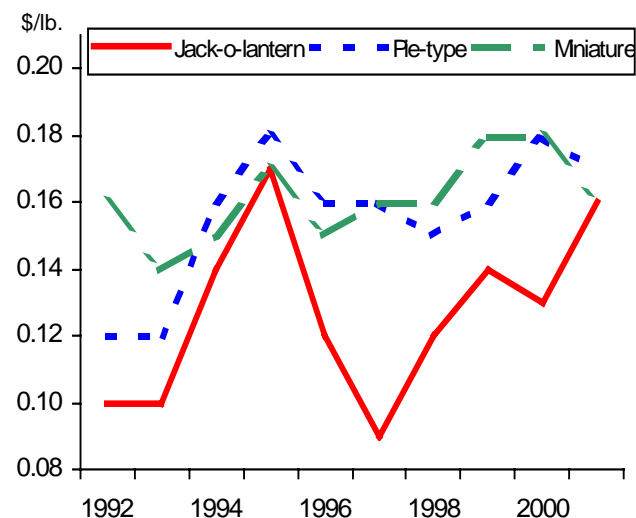
Pumpkins are native to the Americas and are members of the *Cucurbit* (gourd) family, which includes watermelon, cucumbers, and zucchini squash. Pumpkins are grown in virtually every State, with U.S. production for all uses (fresh, ornamental, processing, seed, and other) exceeding 1.7 billion pounds in 2000. According to data derived from the 1997 Census of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Statistics Service of USDA, Illinois is the leading producer with about one-fourth of national production. Most pumpkins produced in Illinois are processed into pie fillings.

California is the second largest source of pumpkins, accounting for about 10 percent of national production. California is the leading supplier of fresh market pumpkins. New York (6 percent), Pennsylvania (6 percent), and Michigan (4 percent) round out the top five producers. Economic Research Service estimates suggest the farm value of the U.S. pumpkin crop was \$172 million in 2000, with the top six States accounting for \$102 million (USDA/NASS).

Pumpkin production has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. According to the Census of Agriculture, the number of farms reporting pumpkin acreage has doubled since 1982 to 10,483. At the same time, area harvested has nearly tripled to 74,354 acres. Partly because of this growth, USDA began estimating annual production and value for the top six states in 2000.

Interstate movement of pumpkins only amounts to several million pounds (out of 1.8 billion produced). Significant movement between States over and above these shipments usually occurs when weather reduces local supplies. As a result, most pumpkins purchased in

Figure 8
Pumpkins: Boston wholesale price, 1992-2001 1/



1/ Price in early October for New England-grown pumpkins.

Source: USDA. AMS. Market News.

Table 9--Pumpkins: Acreage, production, and value, 2000

Item	Acres		Yield Cwt	Produc- tion 1000 cwt	Season- ave price \$/cwt	Crop value 1000 \$
	harvested	Acres				
Illinois 1/	8,900	410	3,636	3.37	12,267	
California 1/	5,900	305	1,800	10.60	19,080	
New York 1/	5,700	200	1,140	23.10	26,334	
Pennsylvania 1/	6,400	170	1,090	9.00	9,810	
Michigan 1/	4,400	160	704	38.00	26,752	
Ohio 1/	3,500	165	579	12.70	7,354	
Others 2/	39,554	217	8,592	8.15	70,064	
United States 2/	74,354	236	17,541	9.79	171,661	

1/ As published by USDA, NASS in "Vegetables, 2000 Summary".

2/ Estimated by ERS based on the 1997 Census of Agriculture.

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA.

local markets come from farms surrounding a given urban area. The popularity of urban pumpkin patches, fall festivals, and ornamental use of pumpkins in homes and businesses have all helped to increase demand over the past two decades. The ornamental jack-o-lantern remains the most popular use of pumpkins in the United States. Total domestic use of all pumpkins was estimated to be 1.6 billion pounds in 2000. This works out to nearly 6 pounds per capita.

Although the most popular food use remains the traditional pumpkin pie, other food uses include bread, muffins, pudding, custards, soup, stuffing, and roasted seeds. New strains of hull-less pumpkin seeds may lead to increased demand for use in foods such as granola, trail mix, and other snack products.

Pumpkins are largely sourced domestically with little apparent world trade. Although there are no HS trade codes specifically for pumpkins, ERS estimates suggest less than 1 percent of domestic use comes from imports and less than 1 percent of production is exported. Because of variations in terminology from region to region, some products traded as pumpkins, may actually be varieties of squash.

Pumpkin prices vary from year to year depending on supplies available and the markets served. In the Boston wholesale market, prices varied in early October for jack-o-lantern style pumpkins depending on the shipping point. Reflecting a larger crop this year in Texas, the price of pumpkins shipped from Texas to Boston were 7 percent below a year earlier. However, the price of a similar offering of New England-grown pumpkins was 20 percent above a year earlier. In general, pie-type and miniature ornamental pumpkin wholesale prices were 5 to 10 percent below a year earlier.