

## Commodity Highlight: Artichokes

Artichokes are believed to have originated in the western and central Mediterranean region. Virtually unused for centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, artichokes made a resurgence in Italy during the middle of the 15th century. Artichokes were reportedly first introduced into the U.S. by the French in Louisiana and the Spanish in California.

California accounts for nearly 99 percent of U.S. artichoke acreage. About 75 percent of California's crop is produced in the Castroville area of Monterey County. Italy is the world's leading producer with 1.14 billion pounds in 2001. A perennial, the artichoke belongs to the *Compositae* (sunflower) family, and is classified as a thistle. It is grown for its round or conical flower heads, which are harvested in the immature stage.

Sold fresh, frozen, and canned, artichokes are low in fat and calories (about 25 calories per medium artichoke), and are a good source of potassium, folate, magnesium, and vitamin C. The artichoke heart (the bottom portion of the trimmed artichoke) is considered a delicacy.

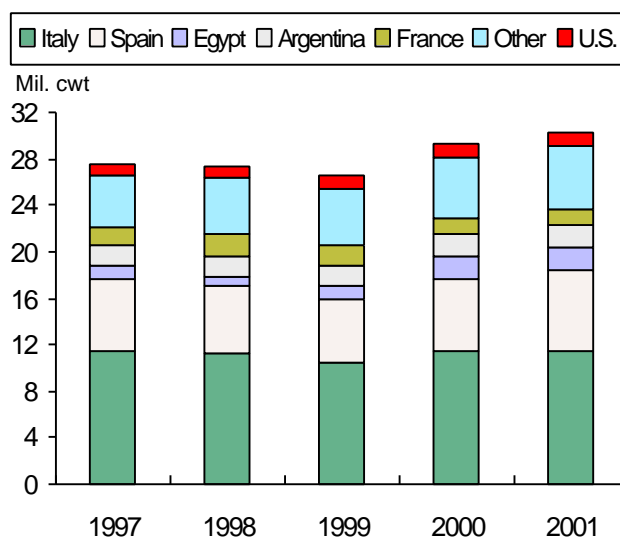
During 1999-2001, artichoke production averaged 105 million pounds in the United States—the sixth largest output in the world. In the United States:

- Artichokes are produced on 101 farms (1997 data);
- The 1999-2001 crop value averaged \$65 million;
- Domestic use averaged 186 million pounds during 1999-2001;
- Per capita use has been trending higher since the 1960s, averaging 0.66 pounds during 1999-2001;
- Artichokes are available year-round with peak volume in March-April;
- Export volume has remained relatively steady at about 4 percent of available supply;
- Imports (mostly processed) have been rising--accounting for 48 percent of domestic use during 1999-2001—up from 24 percent during 1989-91.

In 2001, the United States imported 85 million pounds of canned artichokes valued at \$55 million. Reflecting rising demand, volume was 177 percent greater than in 1991 and 290 percent larger than in 1981. The top sources for canned imports in 2001 include Spain (92 percent of import volume), Italy (4 percent), and Chile (2 percent). The U.S. imported 2.2 million pounds of fresh artichokes in 2001, down 38 percent from a year earlier. About 91 percent of fresh artichoke imports arrive from Mexico.

In 2001, the United States exported 7.3 million pounds of fresh-market artichokes valued at \$3.3 million. Volume was up 18 percent from a year earlier and was second only to the 1999 record. Major fresh export markets in 2001 included Canada (92 percent of export volume) and Mexico (3 percent).

Figure 8  
World artichoke production, 1997-2001



Source: Derived from data supplied by the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations.

Table 14--U.S. artichokes, all uses: Supply, utilization, and price, farm weight

Year	Supply			Utilization			Season-average price	
	Production 1/	Imports 2/	Total	Exports 2/	Domestic	Per capita use	Current dollars 1/	Constant dollars 3/
	-- Million pounds --						-- \$/cwt --	
1970	67.1	9.5	76.6	--	76.6	0.37	10.30	35.17
1980	79.2	19.5	98.7	4.0	94.7	0.42	34.70	60.46
1990	111.4	36.3	147.7	6.5	141.2	0.56	29.50	34.10
1999	112.5	90.3	202.8	7.7	195.1	0.70	67.00	64.02
2000	101.2	87.6	188.8	6.1	182.7	0.65	60.30	56.33
2001	100.0	87.6	187.6	7.3	180.3	0.63	58.20	53.15
2002 f	102.0	90.0	192.0	6.5	185.5	0.64	--	--

-- = Not available. f = ERS forecast. 1/ Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA, except 1990 from California County Agricultural Commissioners Report. 2/ Source: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce. Includes canned and fresh. U.S. exports for 1980 are for Canada only as reported by Statistics Canada. 3/ Calculated using the GDP implicit price deflator, 1996=100.