Commodity Highlight: Mushrooms

Mushrooms have been rising in popularity in the United States over the past several decades. Used as a vegetable, domestic per capita consumption of this carefully cultivated fungus crop has quadrupled since 1966. Per capita use of all mushrooms (on a fresh-weight basis) now totals 4 pounds, compared with just 1 pound in 1966. White agaricus and brown agaricus (largely Crimini, Portabello) varieties account for the majority of sales, with specialty varieties such as Shiitake, Oyster, and other exotic varieties accounting for 4 percent of sales value. Much of the growth in fresh-market sales the past few years has been courtesy of brown agaricus varieties, which now account for 11 percent of total agaricus volume.

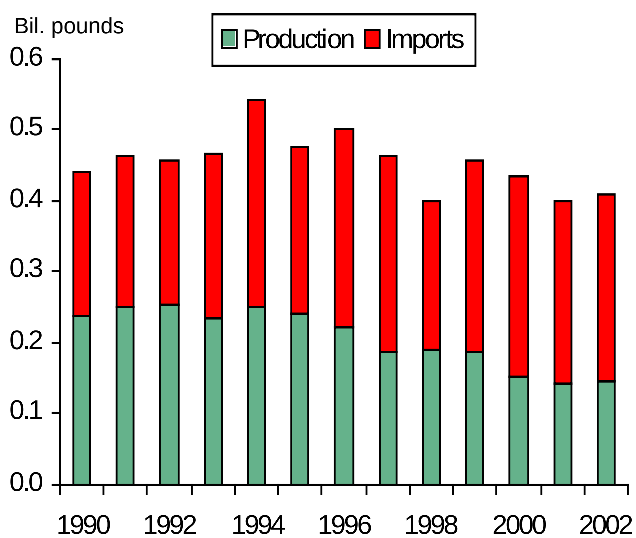
Fresh-market mushrooms account for two-thirds of domestic use. Although per capita use of processing mushrooms has waned in recent years as consumers have generally embraced fresh-market products, use in 2001/02 was still 68 percent greater than in 1966. In comparison, fresh-market consumption has continued to trend higher, reaching a record 742 million pounds in 2001/02—more than 17 times greater than in 1966/67.

In relation to the world, the United States is the second largest producer, with 16 percent of the world total, following China (PRC) which accounts for 30 percent of the output. Mushrooms have been cultivated world-wide for thousands of years, but the U.S. commercial mushroom industry did not take hold until the early 1900s in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania (53 percent of the 1999-2001 total), California (15 percent), and Florida (5 percent) are the top producing States with some 30 other States (1997 Census) reporting pro-duction. Over the 1999-2001 period, mushroom growers sold an average of 859 million pounds. Farm cash receipts from sales averaged $882 million during this time. Consolidation of production facilities continues within the industry. In 2001/02, mushrooms were grown on 262 farms—down 14 percent from 1999/2000 and 34 percent below 1991/92.

According to the International Trade Commission (ITC), in 1997, 27 percent of U.S. producers' shipments of processed mushrooms were distributed to industrial users, 29 percent were distributed to food service users, and 44 percent were distributed to retail users. For domestic producers, the share of these markets has declined during the last decade. Imports have become an important factor on the processing side of the market, with 66 percent of a declining domestic demand satisfied by imports. These largely originated from China, India, Indonesia, and Chile. With U.S. import share increasing from 47 percent of consump-tion in 1992 to 66 percent (effectively cutting domestic production 44 percent and stagnating prices), the ITC determined in late 1998 (Chile) and early 1999 (others) that the domestic industry producing preserved mushrooms was materially injured by reason of dumped imports from Chile, China, India, and Indonesia. Anti-dumping duties are now in place. For fresh mushrooms, less than 2 percent of supplies are exported while imports, which were consistently less than 1 percent of use prior to 1995, now account for 6 percent of consumption.

Figure 6

U.S. mushrooms, processing: Supply, 1990-2002



Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA and Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 12--U.S. fresh-market mushrooms, all: Supply, utilization, and price, farm weight

Year	Supply			Utilization			Season-average price	
	Sales Volume 1/	Imports 2/	Total	Exports 2/	Domestic	Per capita use	Current dollars 1/	Constant dollars 3/
	-- Million pounds --					Pounds	-- $/cwt --	
1980	275.1	0.7	275.8	0.6	275.2	1.20	94.70	165.00
1990	516.1	3.5	519.6	17.7	501.9	1.99	98.10	113.40
1998	671.5	23.2	694.7	13.8	680.9	2.45	108.00	104.70
1999	682.1	29.8	711.9	15.2	696.7	2.48	107.00	102.20
2000	707.2	38.2	745.4	13.0	732.4	2.58	106.00	99.00
2001	708.6	44.6	753.2	11.6	741.6	2.58	115.00	105.00
2002 f	725.0	47.0	772.0	12.0	760.0	2.61	--	--

-- = Not available. f = ERS forecast. 1/ Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. 2/ Source: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce. 3/ Constant-dollar prices were calculated using the GDP implicit price deflator, 1996=100.