



Market Analysis and News Branch

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Statistics on Lettuce Imports State of Hawaii, 2008-2019

The consumption availability of lettuce (head, leaf, and romaine) on a per capita basis has been erratic in the U.S. from 2008 to 2019. The same irregular trend is apparent in Hawaii’s annual production of lettuce during the same period. Hawaii’s lettuce production was estimated at 3.5 million pounds in 2019, a decrease of 12.5% since 2017, and valued at nearly \$7.2 million.

The level of lettuce imports in Hawaii appears inversely related to the volume of local lettuce produced and harvested. This is to say that the proportion of lettuce imports decreases as local production increases, and vice-versa. In 2015, the production of lettuce in Hawaii soared to 5.4 million pounds and corresponding imports dropped to 86.6%. Likewise, in 2019, lettuce production plunged to 3.5 million pounds and the imports proportion surged predictably to 91.2%.

According to various sources (USDA-REEIS, AGMRC), California and Arizona grow most of the lettuce in the U.S. (over 98%). With the advents of climate change, resulting in less predictable supply of irrigation water and an increasing frequency of severe droughts in both the states, the future supply of lettuce may see more irregular trends and wider price fluctuation.

Table 1: Consumption Availability, Production, and Imports of Lettuce in Hawaii

| Year ¹ | Consumption Availability U.S. Per Capita (Pounds) | Consumption Availability in Hawaii ² (Million pounds) | Production in Hawaii (Million pounds) | Imports to Hawaii (Million pounds) | Imports Proportion (Percentage) |
|-------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2008 ³ | 27.2 | 19.4 ⁴ | 2.0 | 17.4 | 89.7% |
| 2015 | 25.5 | 40.1 ⁵ | 5.4 | 34.7 | 86.6% |
| 2017 | 30.3 ⁶ | 48.2 ⁵ | 4.0 | 44.2 | 91.6% |
| 2019 | 25.1 | 40.0 ⁵ | 3.5 | 36.5 | 91.2% |

¹ Sourced from USDA-ERS and USDA-NASS, various years.

² Consumption availability is the sum of production and imports to Hawaii.

³ Sourced from Statistics of Hawaii Agriculture 2011 (HDOA/USDA-NASS). Consistent in-shipment data for lettuce was last published in 2008.

⁴ Not derived from consumption availability of lettuce (U.S per capita).

⁵ Based on annual consumption availability of lettuce (U.S per capita).

⁶ Spike due to a bumper crop for U.S. romaine lettuce.

Chart 1: Hawaii Lettuce Imports by Volume and Availability for Consumption

