

11.4.5 Horticultural crops

Fruits and vegetables. The fruit and vegetable industry is an important part of the agricultural and food distribution sectors of the economy. Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables account for more than one third of the quantity of all food consumed in Canada. There are over 25 fruit and vegetable crops (potatoes excluded) grown commercially in Canada with an annual farm value of over \$200 million.

The most important fruit grown in Canada is still the apple. Commercial apple orchards are found in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, southern Quebec, much of Ontario, and the interior of British Columbia, particularly in the Okanagan Valley. Tender tree fruits — pears, peaches, cherries, plums — are also grown in Ontario, with the most important concentrations in the Niagara Peninsula and in Essex County. These fruits, as well as apricots, are also grown on a large scale in the southern part of the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia.

Strawberries and raspberries are cultivated commercially in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. British Columbia fruit growers also produce loganberries commercially in the lower mainland and on Vancouver Island. Grapes also are grown in the Niagara district of Ontario and on a smaller scale in British Columbia. The native blueberry is found wild over large areas in Canada and is harvested in commercial quantities in the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, and Ontario. A cultivated crop is grown in British Columbia. Table 11.14 shows the estimated commercial production and farm value of fruit grown in 1971-73. The production of field-grown vegetables in Canada is seasonal. During the winter when no domestic vegetables are being harvested, except in greenhouses, supplies of most fresh vegetables are imported duty free from the United States. During the growing season a large percentage of the domestic requirements are met from Canadian crops. Some vegetables are exported from Canada, particularly to a few large centres of population in the United States close to the border. Potatoes are the most important vegetable produced in Canada. Production slightly exceeds consumption and normally about 5% is exported. Table 11.15 presents the estimated commercial acreage and production of vegetables in 1970-72 with average for 1965-69.

The processing industry plays an important part in the marketing of Canadian-grown fruits and vegetables. Over the years factories have been built in most of the important growing regions and considerable proportions of fruit and vegetable crops are canned, frozen or otherwise processed each season, especially asparagus, beans, peas, corn and tomatoes. In recent years the importance of freezing has been increasing. Almost all vegetables for processing are grown under a system whereby the processor contracts annually with each grower for certain acreages.

The processing of canned tender tree fruits has declined considerably and imports have increased rapidly. Over the past 25 years the tonnage and value of exported vegetables has varied considerably but there is a slight upward trend. However, in the same period vegetable imports have doubled.

In recent years the supply of fruits available for consumption in Canada has remained relatively unchanged while vegetables have experienced a decline. The per capita domestic consumption of all fruits for 1972 of 247.1 lb. (fresh equivalent weight) was almost identical to the five-year (1966-70) average of 247.0 lb. Of this total, 109.3 lb. per capita were fresh, 51.8 lb. were canned, 33.0 lb. were frozen and 60.3 lb. were made into juice. Per capita consumption of vegetables, excluding potatoes, was 109.0 lb. for the same period and this was 6.0% lower than the five-year average of 116.0 lb. Each individual consumed an average 64.2 lb. of fresh vegetables, 25.2 lb. of canned vegetables and 9.7 lb. of frozen vegetables in 1972 (fresh equivalent weight). This means that there were 519.3 lb. of fruits and vegetables, including potatoes, available per capita for consumption in Canada in 1972.

Honey. As shown in Table 11.16, honey production in 1973 was above that of 1972. Honey is produced commercially in all provinces except Newfoundland and yields vary to some extent from year to year. Alberta is consistently the largest producer, accounting for almost 40% of the total output in 1973. Honey bees are kept in some fruit-growing districts for pollination purposes and are also used for pollination of certain seed crops. To facilitate storage, shipment and uniformity of quality, large quantities of Canadian honey are pasteurized. Beekeepers' marketing co-operatives are active in several provinces. In 1973 Canada exported 21.7 million lb. of honey valued at \$7.7 million, slightly more than twice the quantity exported in 1972. Ex-