

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Blueberry Annual Voluntary

Country: Mexico

Post: Guadalajara

Report Category: Fresh Fruit

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Report Highlights:

Mexico's 2024 blueberry production is forecast at 81,000 MT, an eight percent increase over 2023 on sufficient water access and growing export demand. The rate of production growth is projected to be slower in 2024 compared to 2023 due to competition from Peru. Production in 2023 reached an estimated 74,800 MT, a twelve percent increase over the previous year due to production innovations and strong export demand. Blueberry exports totaled 71,509 MT in 2022, down about two percent compared to 2021. Imports reached 13,715 MT in 2022, a ten percent decrease from the previous year. The United States is Mexico's top blueberry export market, with a nearly 97 percent share.

Executive Summary

Mexico's blueberry sector has seen rapid growth in the past decade, with increasing prices encouraging growers to expand production or switch from other crops to blueberries. Production grew over 80 percent between 2017 and 2022, reaching 66,847 metric tons (MT), making Mexico the world's fifth largest blueberry producer.

Mexico's per capita blueberry consumption is barely 70 grams per year, constrained by price as well as consumer preference, with blueberries not occupying a place in traditional Mexican cuisine.

In 2022, Mexico's total blueberry exports totaled 71,509 MT, down about two percent compared to 2021. By value, blueberry exports totaled USD 629 million in 2022. Imports reached 13,715 MT in 2022, a ten percent decrease from the previous year. While both import and export volumes decreased in 2022 compared to 2021, rising blueberry prices pushed up trade value, with both imports and exports increasing about seven percent by value from 2021 to 2022.

The United States is Mexico's top blueberry export market, with a nearly 97 percent share, valued at USD 607 million. Other export destinations include the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The U.S. is also Mexico's number one blueberry supplier.

Production

Mexico's calendar year (CY) 2024 blueberry production is forecast at 81,000 MT, an eight percent increase from forecast 2023 production based on expected adequate access to water and growing demand from international markets, predominantly the United States. Despite drought conditions throughout Mexico, local producers report that the berry sector will avoid the impact of water shortages in the near term (1-3 years). The sector is well-equipped with highly efficient irrigation systems, including private reservoirs, and ample operating funds.

Production growth is projected to remain strong in 2024, although not as robust as in 2023 due to a shortened growing and harvest season. Historically, Mexico's harvest began in early October, peaking between late April and early May. In contrast, industry sources report that for the 2024 harvest, producers have taken steps to delay the start of the harvest to early February in response to competition from Peru, which offers a similar product at lower prices during the October-January period. Faced with this competition, Mexican growers have shifted the growing season by delaying new plantings, which is projected to dampen overall production given the relatively significant place of new plantings in total planted area, with the sector currently undergoing a transition from Biloxi to proprietary varieties. Producers are actively switching away from the Biloxi variety to take advantage of the ongoing development of improved varieties that provide higher yields and better taste. According to farmer contacts, 23 percent of blueberry area is currently planted with the Biloxi variety and 74 percent is planted with proprietary varieties, and they expect the share of Biloxi to decrease significantly in the

near term. In addition to delaying new plantings, Mexican producers report that they are delaying fertilizer applications as another technique to push the harvest beyond the Peruvian harvest period.

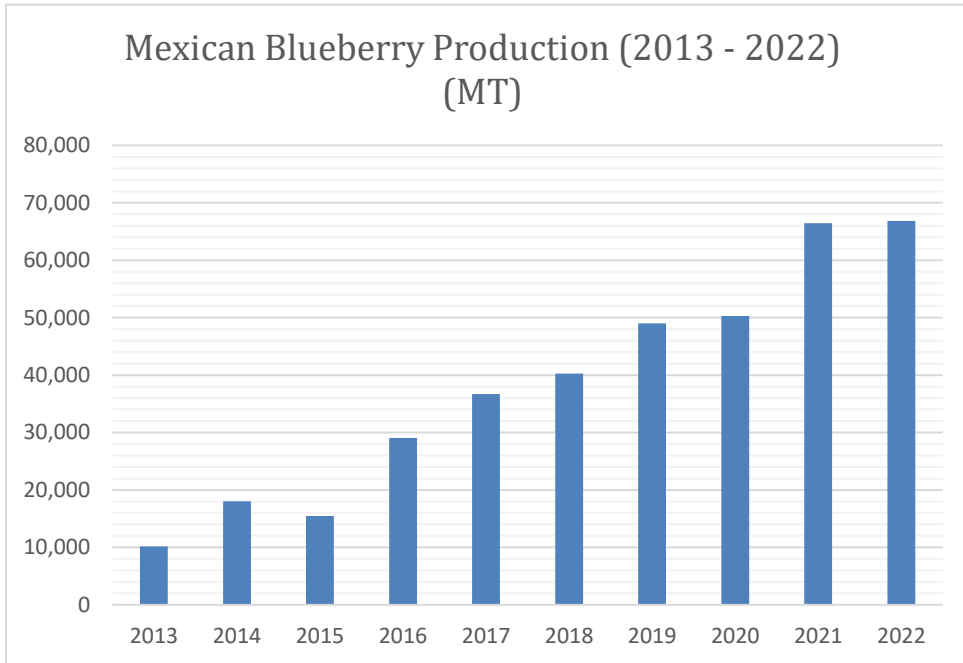
Blueberry production in 2023 reached an estimated 74,800 MT, a twelve percent increase over the previous year due to the use of improved varieties and other innovative production technology as well as strong export demand.

According to data from Mexico’s Agri-food and Fisheries Information Service (SIAP), blueberry production totaled 66,847 MT in 2022. Beginning in 2023, SIAP stopped reporting official blueberry data, for reasons that are not publicly available.

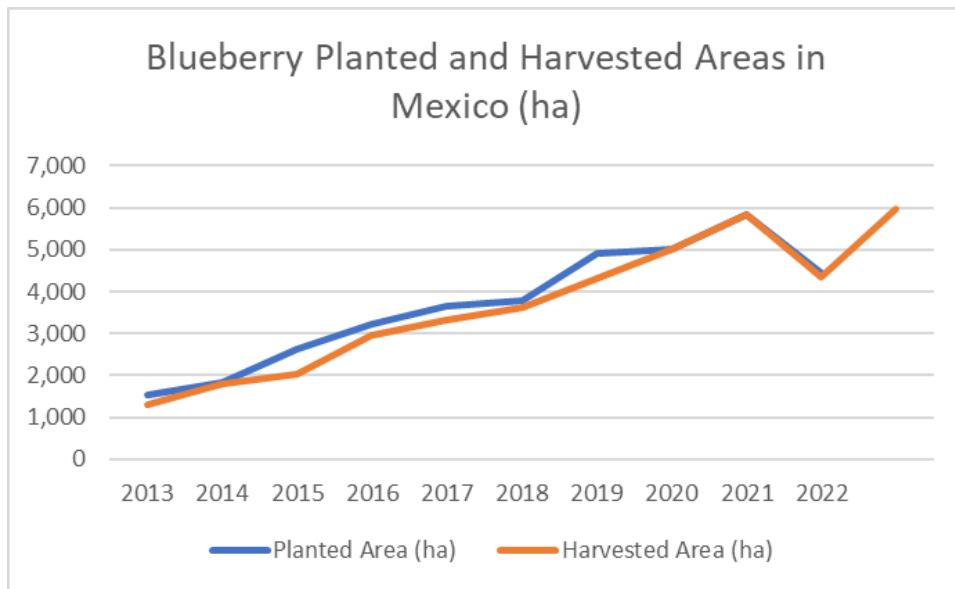
Mexico's blueberry sector has been growing steadily in recent years, realizing a production growth of over 80 percent between 2017 and 2022. During this period blueberry planted area grew from 3,642 hectares (ha) to 4,444 ha, a 22 percent increase. Mexican blueberry exporters benefit from geographical proximity to the United States, with shipments reaching the U.S.-Mexico border in 18 hours or less. Berries are shipped to the U.S. market by truck daily. In addition, Mexico is able to provide blueberries during the off-season periods for other major producing countries, particularly the United States. Further, producers benefit from sustained investment to take advantage of growing export opportunities. Access to improved infrastructure and production methods enables growers to achieve greater yields and protect their crops against risks from pests, extreme weather, and other climate impacts.

Mexican Blueberry Production (2013 – 2022)			
Year	Planted Area (ha)	Harvested Area (ha)	Production (mt)
2013	1,518	1,290	10,160
2014	1,843	1,803	18,031
2015	2,625	2,031	15,489
2016	3,207	2,946	29,067
2017	3,642	3,334	36,700
2018	3,786	3,611	40,251
2019	4,909	4,319	48,999
2020	5,000	5,000	50,293
2021	5,833	5,833	66,482
2022	4,444	4,331	66,847

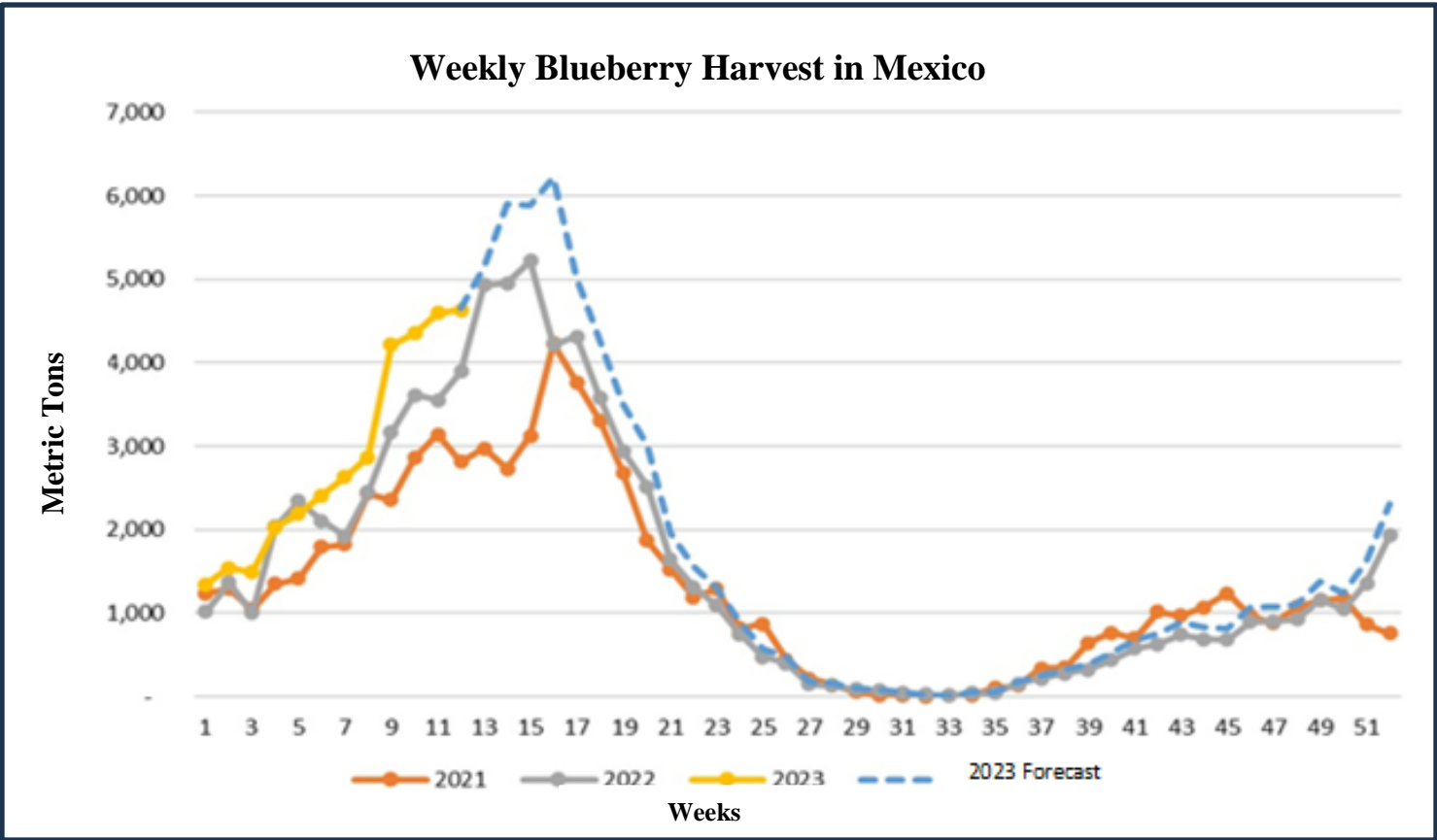
Data source: SIAP



Data source: SIAP

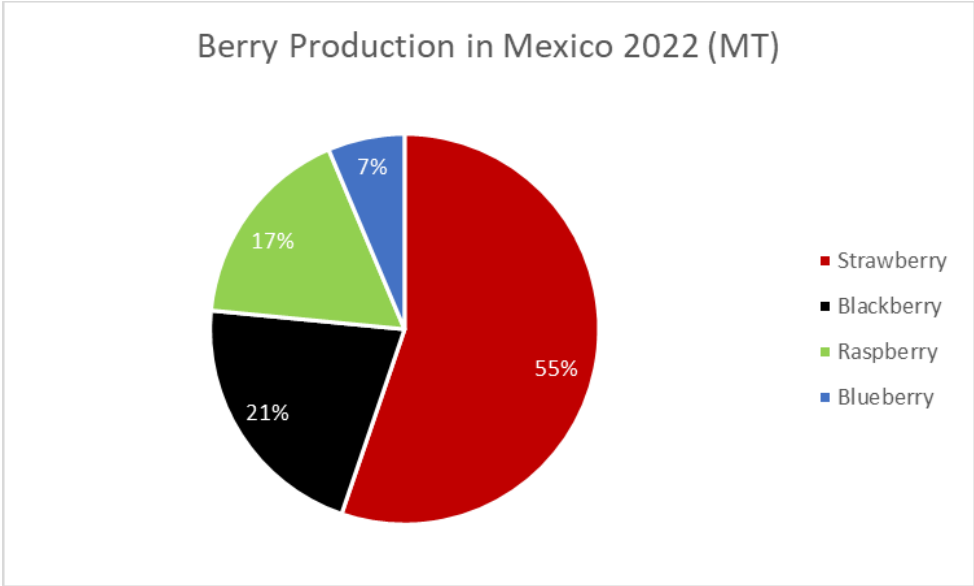


Data source: SIAP



Source: Aneberries

Along with blueberries, Mexico produces strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries. Together, the four berries account for just under 5 percent of Mexico’s overall fruit production, with blueberries contributing 0.4 percent (66,847 MT) of total fruit production, strawberries 2.5 percent (578,142 MT), blackberries one percent (222,608 MT), and raspberries 0.8 percent (178,667 MT).

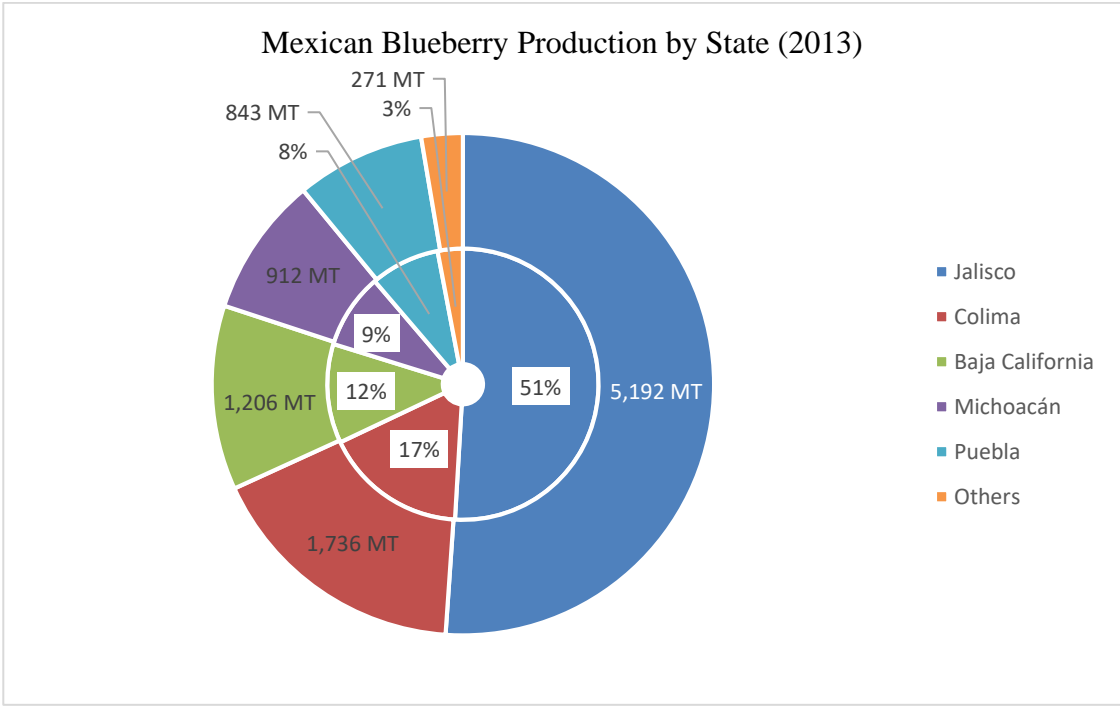


Data source: SIAP

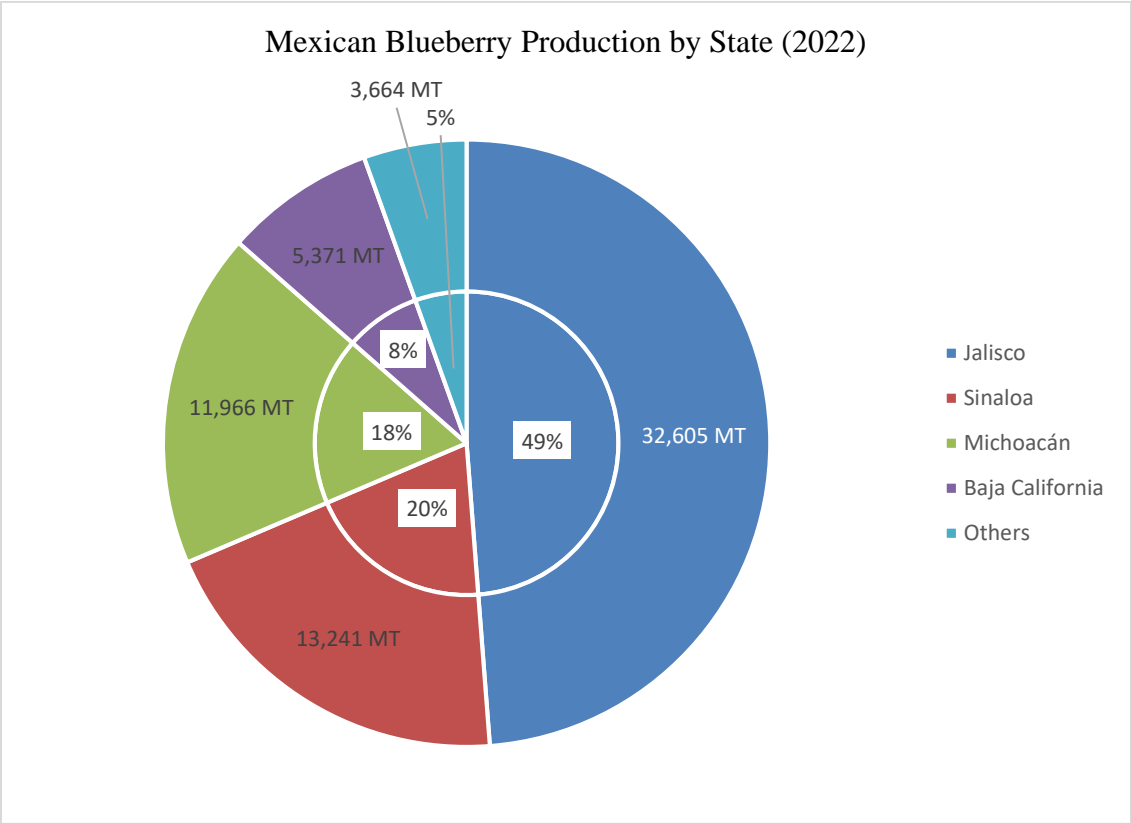
According to data from the Secretariat of the Economy, the value of Mexico’s blueberry production rose from USD 27 million to USD 264 million between 2013 and 2022, an increase of 890 percent. During this time period, Jalisco positioned itself as the leading blueberry producing state, going from 557 ha harvested in 2013 to 2,327 ha harvested in 2022. Jalisco’s climate and geography make it ideal for blueberry production. The state’s soil is mostly moist and acidic. The average temperature ranges from 64 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit in the northern part of the state and remain below 64 degrees Fahrenheit in the highlands. On average, the region sees average rainfall of 1600 mm per year in the highlands and 500mm of rainfall in the coastal plains. Together with Jalisco, three other states – Sinaloa, Michoacan, and Baja California – account for 90 percent of Mexico’s blueberry output. This is owing to their suitable environments, with Sinaloa and Michoacan mirroring Jalisco’s climate and geography, and Baja California sharing similar growing conditions with southern California.



Data source: SIAP



Data source: SIAP



Data source: SIAP

Mexico's blueberry production is carried out under plastic coverings that provide 25 percent UV shade protection from intense sunlight. There is no open/exposed production. About half of the blueberry crop is planted directly in soil, with the other half planted in substrate in seven- and ten-liter containers. Local contacts expect production via substrate will increase in the coming years, noting that production with substrates reduces susceptibility to diseases and facilitates irrigation and harvest. Less than ten percent of blueberry production is organic.

Blueberries are impacted by a variety of pathogens, including bacteria, fungi, and oomycetes. Along with farm chemicals, control methods also include beneficial insects, such as *Neoseiulus californicus*.

Blueberry producers report significant labor force challenges, noting concerns about securing an adequate supply of field laborers and processing plant workers in the near term. Local contacts indicate that labor availability is the primary constraint on production growth, not consumer demand or access to water, land, capital, or technology.

Consumption

According to the Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), annual per capita consumption of blueberries is barely 70 grams. Mexico's limited blueberry consumption is based on the product's relatively high price compared to similar fruit, with blueberry prices increasing in recent years. Consumer preference also plays a role, and blueberries are not present in traditional Mexican cuisine. Blueberries are mostly consumed in jams and jellies, as well as consumed whole and in smoothies. In recent years and with the growth of spirit consumption such as gin, blueberries are being incorporated into mixology in various forms, such as blueberry liqueurs, muddled blueberries in cocktails, and even freeze-dried blueberries for infusions; this trend is part of a larger growth in the consumption of blueberries.

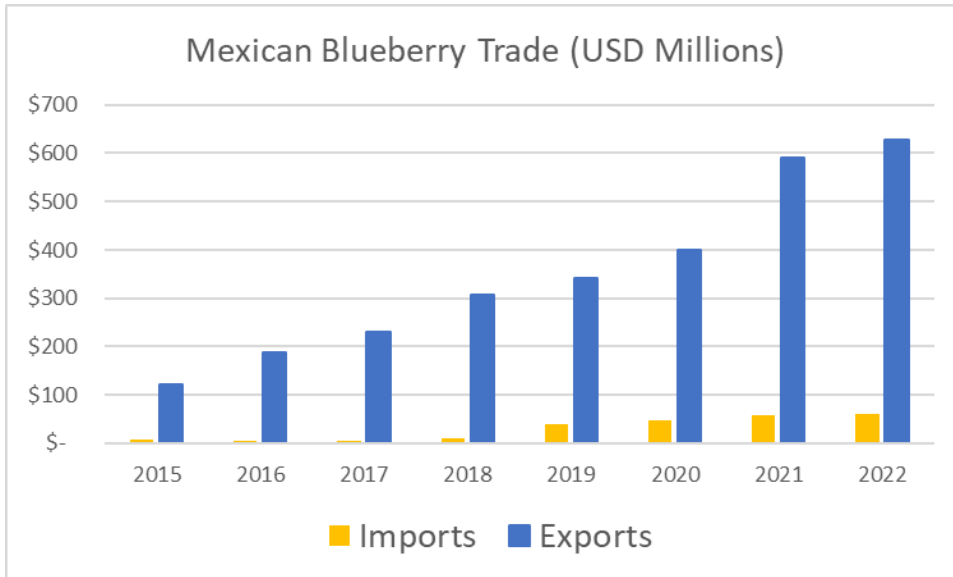
In Mexico, the same Spanish word – *arándano* – is used to refer to both blueberries and cranberries, complicating the marketing landscape for the fruit. Alternatively, and in common usage, many people refer to blueberries as "*mora azul*" (literally, blue berry) rather than *arándano*.

Trade

Mexico's blueberry exports totaled 71,509 MT in 2022, down about two percent compared to 2021, according to data from Mexico's Secretariat of Economy. By value, blueberry exports totaled USD 629 million in 2022.

Mexico's 2022 imports reached 13,715 MT, a ten percent decrease from the previous year. While both import and export volumes decreased in 2022 compared to 2021, rising blueberry prices pushed up trade value, with both imports and exports increasing about seven percent by value from 2021 to 2022.

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Data source: Secretariat of Economy

Overall, berries claimed a top spots among agricultural exports during the past three years. Secretariat of Economy data show that berries (including blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries) were Mexico’s number two food export in 2022, valued at over USD 3.6 billion.

Under the USMCA trade agreement, Mexico has duty-free access for its blueberry exports to the U.S. and Canada.

Attachments:

No Attachments.