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Greenhouse Tomatoes Change the Dynamics of the North American Fresh Tomato Industry

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the North American greenhouse tomato industry has changed the longstanding dynamics of the fresh tomato industry. During the 1990s, Canada emerged as the largest North American producer of greenhouse tomatoes, a prominence it never attained in the fresh field tomato industry. The United States and Mexico have also become important greenhouse tomato producers, consistent with their long dominance in North American fresh field tomato production. Greenhouse tomatoes have changed the look of U.S. retail tomato sales, where they now account for 37 percent of the quantity sold of fresh tomatoes. While the primary U.S. fresh field tomato product, the mature green tomato, long dominated retail sales, its share has decreased significantly due to the growth of greenhouse tomatoes. The U.S. mature green tomato industry is now more dependent on the continuing growth of the foodservice market, which generally prefers its product.

Keywords: Greenhouse tomatoes, field tomatoes, mature green tomatoes, United States, Canada, Mexico, market integration, product differentiation, seasonality in production.

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