



AMERICAN MUSHROOM INSTITUTE

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DEMAND FOR MUSHROOMS REMAINS STRONG, CONTINUES TO INCREASE Production Decreases Due to COVID-19

Avondale, PA, September 1, 2020 – The volume of sales for the 2019-2020 mushroom crop totaled 816 million pounds, down 2 percent from last season, according to the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) 2020 Report. Value of sales for the 2019-2020 mushroom crop was \$1.15 billion, up 3 percent from the previous season. The average reported price was \$1.41 per pound, up 7 cents from the previous year.

United States fresh market sales of *Agaricus* mushrooms totaled 741 million pounds, down 1 percent from the previous season, while processed sales, at 55.6 million pounds, decreased 14 percent from the previous season. *Agaricus* mushroom volume of sales totaled 796 million pounds, down 2 percent from the 2018-2019 season.

According to the report, brown mushrooms (Portabella and Crimini) saw increases in volume, price per pound, and value of sales from 2019 to 2020. Sales volume increased 2.6 percent from last season, price per pound increased from \$1.55 to \$1.57, and the value of sales jumped 3.6 percent from last season.

Value of sales for commercially grown specialty mushrooms in 2019-2020 totaled \$67.4 million, up 2 percent from the 2018-2019 season. A specialty grower is defined as having at least 200 natural wood logs in production or some commercial indoor growing area, and \$200 or more in sales. The average price received by growers, at \$3.37 per pound, was down 7 cents from the revised previous season estimate.

Like other commodities, the Coronavirus significantly impacted the mushroom industry, especially early in the pandemic. “On a commercial mushroom farm, new crops are ‘planted’ or filled every other day. When the Coronavirus hit, no one could have foreseen the markets’ unpredictability. To adjust to the uncertainty, mushroom growers made the decision to scale back crops, in order to sustain the health of their businesses,” explained AMI President Rachel Roberts.

In mid-March, when the country issued stay-at-home orders and restaurants closed, many farms saw an immediate decline in orders. Others, either cut back or delayed future plantings in order to right-size their operations to align with market predictions.

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After the initial shock to retail supply chains, mushroom demand from retailers increased. Consumers adhering to stay-at-home orders were left to consume more meals at home, which included fresh mushrooms. While some restaurants have re-opened with limited capacity, the reduction in foodservice demand continues to impact growers.

Dr. Mark Lang, associate professor of marketing at The University of Tampa who specializes in food marketing and retailing, noted that “consumer demand at retail has been incredibly strong for mushrooms since the health crisis took hold. According IRI data from April to July, mushroom sales were not only strong, they were among the most consistently strong during this time. Weekly sales increases when compared to same week 2019 never dipped below 21% during that time. Only two other items shared that benchmark – oranges and limes.”

According to the Mushroom Council, demand is high, and a recent survey Dr. Lang conducted for the Council in April, entitled “Fresh Mushroom Attitudes and Behaviors During COVID-19,” suggests it will continue at this pace after this crisis. The survey of 750 shoppers found that 25% of consumers plan to cook more with fresh mushrooms “after things get back to normal.” Another 63% plan to cook “about the same.”

“While grocers are currently experiencing this increased demand, it’s probable these new consumer preferences will also carry over to foodservice as restaurants work to rebuild,” said Dr. Lang.

The USDA’s NASS provides an annual report of domestic mushroom production, which was released on August 31, 2020. The report covers all domestic production of mushrooms from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. This year NASS is publishing just two years of data so that 2018-2019, which uses NASS’s newly revised program, and 2019-2020, numbers will be comparable. Then for next year’s report, they will go back to the three-year format of the data. The full report can be found at <https://release.nass.usda.gov/reports/mush0820.pdf>.

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About AMI

The American Mushroom Institute (AMI), headquartered in Avondale, Pennsylvania, is a national voluntary trade association representing the growers, processors and marketers of cultivated mushrooms in the United States and industry suppliers worldwide. For more information, visit www.americamushroom.org.