

# Florida Tomatoes Fast Facts

## The Numbers

### **Value of annual crop**

- 2008-09 season: \$520,205,000
- Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the United States in value of production of fresh market tomatoes
- In 2009 Florida produced approximately 40% of the total U.S. value for fresh market tomatoes
- The cost of producing tomatoes is about \$12,000/acre.

### **Acres planted**

- Average 42,350 acres per season (average from the past 10 years)
- 2008-2009 season: Approximately 34,600 acres



## The Facts

### **Growing season**

- Planted mid-July through mid-March
- Harvesting begins mid-October through mid-November
- Most active mid-November through May
- Ends in June

### **Harvest method**

- All of Florida's tomatoes are hand-picked except for a few experimental plots

### **Number of pickings**

- Depending on the area, tomatoes are harvested two to three times a year
  - The Ruskin-Palmetto production region has two production periods: 40% in the fall and 60% in the spring
  - The South Florida production region has three production periods: 40% in the fall, 25% in the winter and 35% in the spring
  - The Dade County production area harvests the majority of the crop in the winter and limited production occurs in the late fall

### **Common pests and diseases**

- Aphids, blister beetles, tomato hornworm, stink bugs, tomato fruitworms

### **Miscellaneous**

- Tomatoes taste best if they are not refrigerated
- Tomato consumption has increased by 50% over the last 40 years
- Florida produces virtually all of the fresh-market, field-grown tomatoes in the U.S. from October through June each year

### *Sources:*

*2010 Florida Agriculture Statistical Directory  
Florida Tomato Facts, Florida Tomato Committee  
<http://www.floridatomatoes.org/>*