

Agricultural Production, Distribution, and Processing – Brief Florida Perspective

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Agricultural Production in Florida

Advantages

- Mild climate and long growing season
- Tropical and subtropical agriculture possible
- Relatively ample rainfall (although droughts are common)
- **Access to transportation networks**

Challenges

- Mostly sandy soils
- **Pests and disease**
- **Population growth and urbanization**
- Nutrient/runoff-related water quality issues
- Pressure to reduce intensity of existing agriculture



Distribution of Agricultural Products*

- Agriculture is the largest user of freight transportation in the US (31%)
- 4 major modes of transportation and challenges:
 - Trucking – Weight limits
 - Railroads – Rising rates
 - Barges – Deteriorating infrastructure
 - Ocean Vessels – Container availability
- Access to transportation networks and transportation rates affect the prices growers receive for their products
- Transportation policy is mode-oriented; potential benefits from a systems-based approach

* Source: USDA and USDOT (2010) Study of Rural Transportation Issues



Processing of Agricultural Products

- Ways consumers/restaurants get their food
 - Direct from Farm/Wholesaler: CSA, Farmers Markets, Market Maker, Cottage Processing, Restaurants
 - Food Supply Chain: Vertically integrated food factories (e.g., Kroger, Publix, Walmart), or “big ag.” (e.g., Perdue, ConAgra, Nestle)
- On the radar: Food Safety Modernization Act

