

AN ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. DEMAND FOR AVOCADO (*Persea americana* Mill)

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The United States is the third largest avocado producer, following Mexico and Indonesia. Since the late 1980s, the United States has shifted from being a net exporter of avocados to being a net importer, bypassing France, in 2002, to become the world's number one importer of avocados. The U.S. consumption of avocados has increased considerably within recent times, from a per capital level of 1.53 pounds in 1996 to 3.27 pounds in 2006. Several factors are responsible for the increased U.S. consumption of avocados, including year-round availability of fresh avocados due to imports, lower avocado prices, a rapidly growing Hispanic population, the promotion of the health benefits of avocado, and increased disposable income. There are, however, concerns that the U.S. avocado market is becoming saturated, which could have dire consequences for avocado prices. This paper discusses growth factors in-depth and, with the help of a multi-regression analysis, forecasts the likely impact on avocado prices up to the year 2010.