GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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# The Latest USDA Statistics

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In February, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA/NASS) released the data for the 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties (which is conducted every five years) and the Floriculture Crops: 2024 Summary (an annual survey).

From the Census data, we learn that total sales of all horticultural specialties for 2024 were reported at $18.307 billion. This was up from the $13.779 billion reported for 2019; however, the 2024 data include $1.503 billion in cultivated mushrooms and $34.011 million for hemp grown under protection—two new crop categories to the Census for 2024.

The Census data includes reports from producers that had as little as $10,000 in sales of horticultural specialties in 2024—the same definition that's been used since the 1998 Census. Overall, 23,060 firms reported sales of one or more of the horticultural specialty crops in 2024, up 11.6% from the 20,655 firms reporting in 2019.

Examining Census data for floriculture, we learn that there were 12,497 firms reporting floriculture sales for 2024, compared to only 10,939 firms who reported sales in 2019, an increase of 14.2% in grower numbers. Sales for these firms were $6.795 billion in 2024, compared to $5.545 billion in 2019, an increase of 22.6%. Over the 2019 to 2024 period, the Consumer Price Index increased 22.63%, suggesting that total floriculture industry sales just kept pace with inflation during this period.

Sales of bedding/garden plants were reported by 8,739 firms in 2024, compared to 8,165 firms that reported sales in 2019, an increase of 7.0% in producer numbers. These firms reported sales of $4.027 billion in 2024, compared to only $3.167 billion in 2019—an increase of 27.2% in sales.

Within the bedding plant category, annuals were produced by 7,066 firms in 2024 vs. 6,687 firms in 2019 (an increase of 5.7% in producer numbers). These firms had 2024 sales of $2.667 billion vs. $2.244 billion in 2019 (an increase of 18.8%).

Perennial plants were produced by 5,068 firms in 2024, down 0.8% from the 5,108 firms producing perennials in 2019. The firms reported perennial sales of $1.36 billion in 2024, up 47.4% from the $922.6 million reported in 2019.

All told, annuals made up 66.2% of the bedding/garden plant sales in 2024, compared to 70.9% in 2019, thus, sales of annuals are yielding some share to perennial sales for the bedding/garden plant category.

Sales of potted flowering plants for 2024 were reported by 4,014 firms vs. 3,977 firms in 2019, an increase of 0.9% in grower numbers. These firms had sales of $1.287 billion in 2024, up 7.2% from $1.200 billion in 2019. Considering inflation of 22.63% over this period, this sales increase is rather disappointing.

Sales of foliage plants for 2024 were reported by 2,524 firms vs. 2,336 firms in 2019, an increase in grower numbers of 8% producing in this category. Sales in 2024 were $931.6 million, up 34.7% from 2019's sales of $691.5 million.

Sales of cut flowers for 2024 were reported by 3,347 firms vs. 2,035 firms for 2019. This 64.5% increase in grower numbers was the largest percentage increase for any segment in the entire 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties. Sales were $467.5 million in 2024, up 21.2% from the 2019 sales of $385.7 million.

Sales of cut cultivated greens in 2024 were reported by 617 firms vs. 644 firms for 2019, a decrease of 4.2% in grower numbers for the category. Sales were $81.0 million in 2024, compared to $99.98 million for 2019, a decrease of 19%.

Sales of nursery stock in 2024 were reported by 6,437 firms, down 0.3% from the 6,458 firms reporting sales in 2019. Sales were $5.340 billion in 2024 vs. $4.545 billion in 2019, an increase of 17.5%.

The 2024 Census of Horticultural Specialties includes sales of 13 other horticultural specialty crops, including data on plant propagative materials; sod; bulbs, corms, rhizomes and tubers; mushrooms; hemp grown under protection; food crops grown under protection; transplants of commercial vegetable and strawberry production; vegetable seeds; flower seeds; aquatic plants; cultivated Christmas trees; short rotation woody trees; and tobacco transplants. **GT**