

The Mexican Association of Protected Horticulture (AMHPAC) has reported an increasing amount of bell pepper production coming from greenhouses, as food safety and economic issues become key for growers.

An AMHPAC representative told [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com) that around 32% of Mexican bell peppers were expected to be greenhouse-grown this year, having increased from 25% in 2012, and 30% in 2013.



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"There's a wide range of reasons," business intelligence manager Santiago Beltran said.

"The main one is food safety, which has become a big issue with American consumers over the last few years. And greenhouses are generally safer.

"Another reason is regarding economics for the growers; you have a lot more yield in a much smaller surface so you can grow a lot more produce with better quality."

Around 15% of the Mexican protected horticulture surface area is used for bell pepper cultivation, and rough estimates indicate some 163,000 metric tons (MT) will be produced this year.

AMHPAC growers' bell pepper production was estimated to be 139,000 MT in 2012, and 142,000 MT last year.

Beltran said its growers had reported 80% of production was destined for export to the U.S., followed by 6% to Canada, and the rest would be sold to domestic markets.

He added that while he couldn't comment on how the season was going for every grower, his perception was a positive one.

"We have not received any reports of catastrophic climatic conditions from any of our affiliated growers, there haven't been any major problems within the markets for bell peppers and there haven't been any food safety or issues with the commercialization of bell peppers," Beltran said.

According to the United State's Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service, imports of Mexican bell peppers reached 355,000 MT in 2013, representing 74% of all bell pepper imports to the U.S. and 98% of bell pepper exports from Mexico.

Market prices in both Mexico and the U.S. have been falling gradually since a peak in March but prices have reportedly stabilized now.



Source: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

While no new varieties were reported to have taken off recently, certain cultivars were said to be growing in popularity.

"Within AMHPAC's growers there's been a little increase in the amount of mini bell peppers grown but we haven't detected an "up and coming" variety of peppers within protected agriculture," Beltran said.

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