

Avocados have overtaken bananas as the most valuable fruit import in the United States, accounting for 15% of the total last year which itself hit a new high of US\$18.1 billion.

This represents almost a US\$6 billion rise since 2013, largely driven by imports from Mexico which have more than doubled in the same timeframe and also increased 37% last year to reach US\$7.2 billion.

According to recently published statistics by ITC Trade Map for 2017, bananas still remained the leading fruit import commodity in terms of volume with a 54% uptick to 4.8 million metric tons (MT), but this was a rebound to fairly normal levels after a sharp decline in 2016.

Second in volume were pineapples which also saw a similar percentage rebound to 1.15 million MT, while avocados were third with a 10% rise to 900,186MT.

Imports of fresh table grapes rose 3% to US\$1.7 billion, making it the third-largest commodity by value, while other categories that saw upticks included raspberries and blackberries (+14%; US\$994 million), pineapples (+4%; US\$750 million), mangoes (+13%; US\$656 million), strawberries (+15%; US\$643 million), lemons and limes (+10%; US\$550 million) and mandarins (+22%; US\$462 million).

Blueberries saw their first decline over the five-year period, albeit by just 1% down to US\$970 million, while fresh melons also fell off what had been an upward trajectory, dropping 7% to US\$439 million.

It should be noted that the Trade Map list also includes cashew nuts, which were the fourth-largest commodity in value with a 28% rise to US\$1.6 billion. This explains much of Vietnam's phenomenal rise to become the country's fourth-largest supplier.

Chile retained its position in second place by a long shot despite a 9% drop to US\$2.3 billion, followed by Guatemala (+9%; US\$1.5 billion), Vietnam (+29%; US\$1.2 billion), Costa Rica (+8%; US\$1.2 billion), Peru (+25%; US\$915 million), Ecuador (-25%; US\$461 million), Honduras (+1%; US\$452 million), Canada (-7%; US\$361 million) and India (+50%; US\$231 million).

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