

Total U.S. organic fresh produce sales for the second quarter of 2021 saw a continuation of year-over-year growth, increasing by 4 percent from the same period last year and nearing \$2.3 billion for the quarter.

The figures are according to the *Q2 2021 Organic Produce Performance Report* released by Organic Produce Network and Category Partners.

Organic fresh produce sales and volume in the second quarter of 2021 continued to show year-over-year growth despite the fact that the second quarter of last year was when the Covid-19 pandemic shuttered most foodservice outlets, causing supermarket sales to soar.

By contrast, conventionally grown fresh produce sales and volume declined. Organic fresh produce sales totaled \$2.296 billion for the quarter, up 4.1 percent in sales and 0.2 percent in volume, while conventional produce saw dollar sales decrease by 3.3 percent and volume off by 8.6 percent compared to the same period a year ago.

For the first time, the berry category (which includes strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries) displaced packaged salads as the number one organic category in dollar sales.

Overall, year-over-year berry sales increased by a substantial 19 percent in the second quarter, with volume up 16 percent during the same time frame. Total organic berry sales topped \$435 million for the quarter.

"It's apparent that consumer supermarket food purchases now increasingly reflect the more traditional buying trends versus COVID-inspired purchasing changes. It is also encouraging that even though consumer purchases of conventional produce were lower than Q2 2020, organic produce continued to generate growth," said Steve Lutz, senior vice president of insights and innovation at Category Partners.

The top 10 organic produce categories showed mixed results in both sales and volume for the second quarter of 2021, with berries, apples, lettuce, bananas, and citrus registering sales gains, while packaged salads, herbs, carrots, tomatoes, and potatoes showed modest declines. Berries were also the star performer in volume growth, joining citrus, lettuce, and tomatoes in gains for the quarter.

"As we come out of the pandemic, and foodservice channels have reopened, the widespread pantry loading that occurred during the second quarter of last year has subsided. The result is that many produce categories showed little, if any, growth in Q2 2021 when compared to

last year,” said Matt Seeley, CEO of Organic Produce Network.

“The fact remains organic fresh produce continued to generate year-over-year growth in sales and volume, while conventional produce declined against the same period last year.”

During the second quarter, year-over-year organic sales and volume declined in the Western part of the United States, where normally the region leads the nation. Compared to the second quarter of 2020, where the West region showed organic sales soaring by 17 percent and volume up by 18 percent, Q2 2021 showed a small decline in dollars (0.2 percent) and a volume decrease of 3.9 percent.

While the West continued to lead in total sales and volume, the strongest year-over-year gains for the quarter were seen in the Northeast region, where dollar sales jumped by 7.7 percent and volume increased by 3.6 percent.