

U.S. fruit imports soared by 19 percent year-on-year on July to reach a record US\$1.57 billion, according to newly released USDA data.

The previous record for July was set in 2019 when imports were registered at \$1.45 billion.

Until that year, the value of the total U.S. fruit imports had risen fairly steadily for the previous decade, with just \$672 million recorded in 2019.

Imports in July 2020 fell slightly from 2019 to \$1.32 billion amid numerous industry challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All major fruit categories listed by the USDA saw increases in value for July 2021 compared to 2020 - including citrus, deciduous, melons, processed, frozen and juices.

Some of the biggest increases from specific fresh commodities came from: avocados, which grew by 24 percent to \$235 million; mandarins, up 16 percent to \$49 million; lemons, up 40 percent to \$47 million and clementines, up 62 percent to \$40 million, and apples, up 43 percent to \$34 million.

There were also increases for bananas, up 6 percent to \$156 million; blueberries, up 35 percent to \$46 million; and kiwifruit, up 84 percent to \$24 million.

Aside from fresh, the fruit juice category grew by 37 percent to \$189 million, while processed grew 6 percent to \$156 million, and frozen grew by 27 percent to \$108 million.

Looking at the different origins of U.S. fruit imports, Mexico remained in the lead, with imports from the country rising by 22 percent to \$507 million. Next came Chile, which saw a huge 46 percent increase to \$162 million, and third was Peru, which saw trade drop by 5 percent to \$108 million.

Meanwhile, fruit imports from Costa Rica rose by 17 percent to \$100 million, and from Canada they rose by 14 percent to \$93 million.