

A recent report from [RaboResearch](#) found that despite being a mature market, U.S. strawberry consumption continues to grow, both in terms of household penetration and volume, and driving an increase in imports as well as planted crops in California.

The report was authored by Senior Analyst, Produce, David Magaña; Fresh Produce Analyst Almuhanad Melhim; and Senior Analyst, Farm inputs Samuel Taylor. It found that even though the U.S. market is considered mature, it still shows growth patterns uncanny for a mature market, and will continue to lead the “berry patch” in the near future.

Growth in demand is estimated at around 3% CAGR annually, the report found.

This growth has helped drive an increased level of imports, and also driven multi-year high acreage in the state of California. Together, these trends are expected to improve availability of the fruit for 2022, with prices remaining steady.

This is not to say there is no uncertainty facing the crop, with high input costs the biggest contributing factor in the short term.

This demand also has made the fruit the golden child, at least for fruits, of the Controlled Agricultural Environment (CEA) industry, with vertical strawberry farms being a growing source of interest.

Just recently, Bowery Farming [launched a new “discovery” pack](#) that features two vertically grown strawberry cultivars in side-by-side compartments, the first commercial offer of vertically grown fruit. Driscoll’s and Plenty have also [committed to controlled](#), vertical production as well, expanding on an initial test agreement.

The California strawberry harvest is [currently hitting its peak season](#), as California growers have increased the share of early season fruit.