

The value of total fruit imports into the U.S. soared by a quarter to a new record over January and February this year, with fresh, frozen and processed categories all seeing double-digit growth.

USDA data shows that imports over the two months rose by 23 percent year-on-year to \$4.9 billion.

In the previous four years over the same two months, the import value had always totalled between \$3.7 billion and \$4 billion.

However, the import volume did not rise at the same pace as the value, growing by just 7 percent year-on-year. But they still hit a record of 2.6 million tons.

Looking at the value, the 'other fruit category' - which is by far the largest and includes avocados, berries and bananas - rose by 19 percent to \$2.5 billion. The rise was driven primarily by avocados and blueberries.

The citrus category saw the biggest growth, almost doubling to \$253 million. That increase was driven by mandarins and limes.

The other categories listed by the USDA - deciduous, juices, processed, frozen, melons, dried and prepared - all experiencing growth ranging from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties.

Of the top-five supplying countries, import growth was largest from Mexico and Peru - at 27 percent each. Next was Chile, up 14 percent, Guatemala, up 11 percent, and Costa Rica, up 6 percent.