

Mexican tomato growers in northern regions may have been experiencing prolonged drought, but production for the 2021-22 season looks set for 3.7 million tons up from 3 million tons the season before, according to a USDA report, which predicts similar volumes for the next campaign.

The study found that the sector's expansion into greenhouse and other technological methods of production was largely behind the higher yields for the season, with the phenomenon taking place in both major producing states as well as lower volume regions.

Despite abnormally dry conditions in some production areas, the USDA said no major shortfalls had been reported due to weather-related difficulties to date.

The report's authors also found that if normal conditions for open-field production are unaffected and the sector continued to invest in greenhouse and shade technologies, 2022-23 was likely to match their official production estimate for 2021-22 at 3.7 million tons.

On the export side, volumes to the key U.S. market are expected to dip slightly from 1.76 million tons in 2020-21 to 1.7 million tons for 2021-22.

However, if growing conditions remain the same and U.S. demand continues to increase, the report predicts exports will rise to 1.9 million tons for 2022-23.

Mexico's tomato season runs from December-April from Sinaloa - the country's largest tomato grower with 23% of production - before moving to San Luis Potosí, followed by Michoacán, Baja California, Zacatecas, Morelos, Puebla, and Jalisco between May and November.

The U.S. remains by some distance the largest export market for Mexican tomatoes, receiving some 91% of shipments, absorbing almost all Mexico's supply of exportable fresh tomatoes, the report concluded.