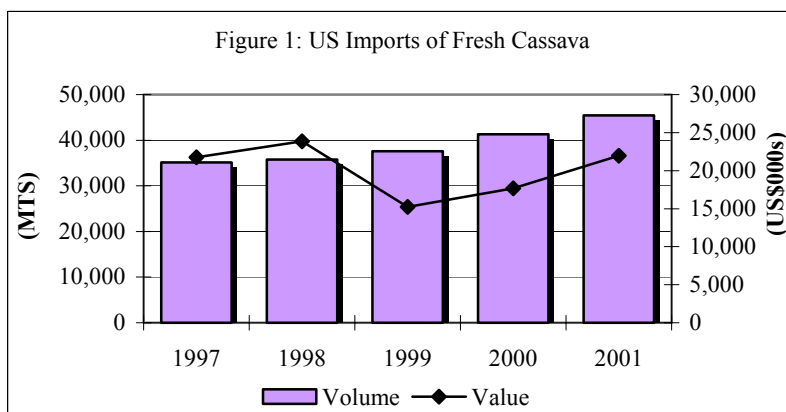


# CASSAVA



HILLSIDE  
AGRICULTURAL  
PROGRAM  
Product Bulletin # 5  
2001 – 2002



Source: USITC

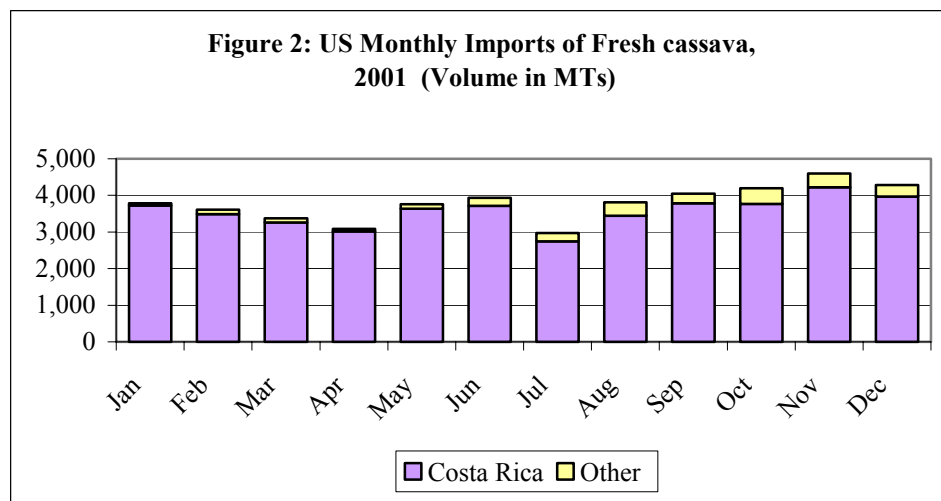
*Cassava, also called yuca, manioc, mandioca, and aipim, is a tuberous root which is a staple food in many Africa and Latin American communities.*

**Imports:** US imports of fresh cassava have been increasing steadily for the past five years, averaging around 40,000 MTs per annum. In 2001 both import volumes and values increased by 10 and 21 percent, respectively, from 2000 figures.

**Seasonality:** Cassava is exported year-round to the US.

Imports fluctuated between 2,700 MTs and 4,200 MTs per month in 2001. US imports of Cassava are at their highest from August to December.

**Market Share:** Costa Rica dominates the US market for fresh cassava, representing a huge challenge for new suppliers. It regularly maintains market share of over 94 percent, and in 2001 supplied close to 96 percent of US fresh cassava imports. Five other countries shipped smaller volumes to the US, including Ecuador, which exported 1,811 MTs; Panama (121 MTs) and Nicaragua (78 MTs).



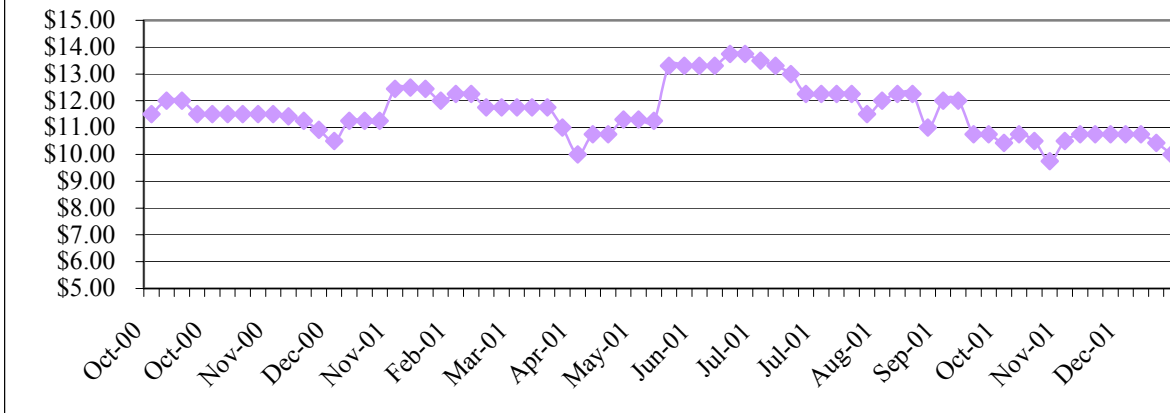
Source: USITC

**Prices:** The large supply of cassava from Costa Rica helps maintain prices at a low level. Miami wholesale prices for 50-lb containers of cassava ranged from \$9.00 to \$11.00 for most of the 2001 period. Prices reached a

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**Figure 3: Miami Wholesale Price for Costa Rican Fresh Cassava  
(US\$ per 50-lb carton)**



Source: USDA/MNS

peak of \$14.00 in June and July.

**Quality Standards:** The outside skin of cassava is similar in appearance and texture to tree bark; the inside flesh is white as coconut flesh. Skin should be rough and dense and either pink or brown in color. Cassava flesh is a brilliant and consistent white and slightly fibrous. No sliminess, mold, or hairline cracks should be visible. Product should smell clean and fresh as well, with no traces of ammonia odor. Any yellowing of the skin is a sign of aging, and such products should be discarded. If product has been dipped in wax, the coating should not be cracked. Desired product ranges from 1.4 to 4 inches in diameter and up to 2 feet in length, and weighs from 1.5 to 3 lbs.

**Storage:** Fresh cassava deteriorates rapidly, often within 48 hours of harvest. Refrigeration is relatively ineffective, but freezing is a possibility. Cassava can be stored for up to 4 months at 0-2° C with at least 90% relative humidity. Care must be taken while handling cassava, as micro-wounds sustained during and after harvest lead to rot and mould formation in the flesh. Product is usually dipped in wax to stave off deterioration.



**Packaging:** As with most roots and tubers, cassava is packed loose with no additional packing materials into 40- or 50-lb. corrugated cardboard boxes. Cassava do not require any kind of fumigation or other pest prevention method prior to entry into the US; however, in regards to the layer of wax, all coatings used on fruits and vegetables imported into the US must meet FDA food additive specifications, and any foods treated with wax or paraffin must be labeled as such.