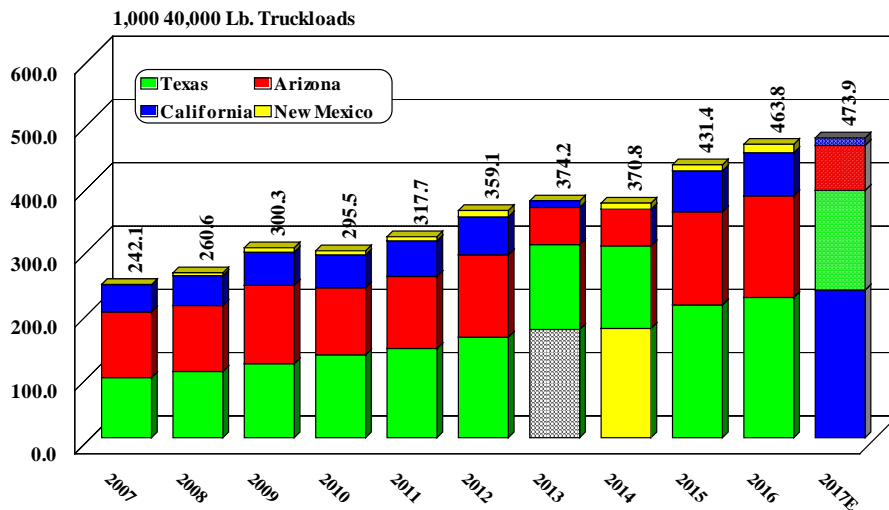


Produce imports from Mexico are a major source of economic activity in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) of Texas. In 2016, the United States imported \$11.4 billion of fresh and frozen produce, including fruits, vegetables and nuts from Mexico, with about 97 percent entering the United States by land ports between Mexico and Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California. When considering only fresh fruit and vegetables, which is about 94 percent of the total, imports totaled \$10.7 billion. These imports were shipped in the equivalent of 463,755 forty-thousand pound truckloads.

Over the past decade, Texas land ports have experienced a large increase of produce imports from Mexico, 92 percent from 2007-2016 (Figure 1). About 47.8 percent of U.S. fresh fruit and vegetable imports worth \$5.1 billion entered through Texas land ports, which arrived in 221,662 truckloads. Arizona is second with 34.6 percent followed by California and New Mexico with 14.7 and 2.9 percent, respectively. In 2010, Texas surpassed Arizona as the largest state of entry for Mexican fresh produce.

**Figure 1. U.S. Imports of Fresh Produce from Mexico by Truck, 2007-2017E**



Source: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA and Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University System  
2017 Estimate Based on January-October Actuals

Table 1 shows monthly imports of fresh fruit and vegetables from Mexico by truck by main ports of entry from January 2016 to October 2017. The major LRGV ports for fresh fruits and vegetables imports are Pharr, Rio Grande City and Progreso. The “YTD Change” is the year-to-date change between 2016 and 2017 (January to October). Thus, the number of truckloads crossing through Pharr has increased by 2.3 percent, while Progreso increased 82.1 percent following a drop in 2016, and Rio Grande City decreased by 3.7 percent. The LRGV as a whole, which also includes Brownsville and Los Indios, has increased by 6.9 percent. Laredo experienced

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a slight decrease of 0.2 percent with Nogales, Arizona decreasing by 2.3 percent and Otay Mesa, California increasing by 4.3 percent.

Comparing the two largest single ports of entry for fresh produce from Mexico, Nogales and Pharr, we can see the difference in number of shipments continues to decline. In 2014 the difference between Nogales and Pharr averaged of 2,137 truckloads per month, or 10,240 and 8,103 truckloads per month, respectively. However, Nogales' lead over Pharr dropped to an average of 772 truckloads per month in 2015 and again to 480 truckloads per month in 2016. Through October 2017, Pharr has averaged 408 more truckloads per month than Nogales, making the first time that Pharr is higher than Nogales at any point during a year.

It remains to be seen if Pharr will end the year with more fresh fruit and vegetable import traffic than Nogales as November and December are typically big months for Nogales. However, the final totals will be very close and this could be the first year that more truckloads of Mexican fresh produce enter the United States via Pharr than Nogales.

**Table 1. Imports of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables from Mexico by Truck by Selected Ports, January 2016 - October 2017 (40,000 Lb. Units)**

	<u>LRGV</u>	<u>Pharr</u>	<u>Rio Grande</u> <u>City</u>	<u>Progreso</u>	<u>Laredo</u>	<u>Nogales</u>	<u>Otay</u> <u>Mesa</u>
Jan-16	18,411	15,508	1,181	1,722	6,001	17,541	3,961
Feb-16	18,399	14,602	1,203	2,594	4,783	19,205	3,300
Mar-16	17,155	15,568	1,266	324	4,717	19,864	3,884
Apr-16	15,613	14,152	1,128	303	4,856	25,097	4,345
May-16	11,348	10,290	724	276	3,000	21,439	3,357
Jun-16	13,873	12,094	871	622	2,204	10,697	4,984
Jul-16	13,455	11,421	924	830	2,792	2,189	4,749
Aug-16	12,270	10,543	802	732	2,943	1,992	4,674
Sep-16	13,308	11,424	981	721	3,328	2,462	4,457
Oct-16	13,851	11,572	1,265	964	3,176	8,581	4,143
Nov-16	12,346	10,463	909	954	3,791	12,198	4,247
Dec-16	13,579	11,532	857	1,152	4,578	13,671	4,287
Jan-17	17,710	14,286	1,047	2,316	4,905	17,900	3,996
Feb-17	17,608	13,497	1,108	2,950	3,988	16,228	3,460
Mar-17	20,585	15,320	1,381	3,853	5,041	19,157	4,978
Apr-17	16,625	13,626	1,124	1,837	4,565	22,308	4,915
May-17	16,337	13,495	986	1,745	3,381	21,932	4,086
Jun-17	15,278	13,113	889	975	3,284	10,906	5,391
Jul-17	14,610	12,502	929	881	2,813	2,638	4,869
Aug-17	13,331	11,994	762	380	2,729	2,241	4,011
Sep-17	12,550	11,107	672	636	3,002	3,000	3,915
Oct-17	13,274	11,174	1,068	973	4,000	9,727	4,041
<b>YTD Change</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>	<b>-2.3%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>2016 Jan-Oct AVG</b>	<b>14,768</b>	<b>12,717</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>3,780</b>	<b>12,907</b>	<b>4,185</b>
<b>2017 Jan-Oct AVG</b>	<b>15,791</b>	<b>13,011</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>3,771</b>	<b>12,603</b>	<b>4,366</b>

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