



## America's Flower Basket: Colombian Flowers and the American Marketplace

### U.S. Flower Consumption

- ✿ Colombia is the largest supplier of fresh cut flowers to the United States.<sup>1</sup> Three quarters (77%) of all imported cut flowers to the U.S. – 62% of cut flowers sold – come from Colombia. U.S. cut flower imports by country of origin include:
  - Colombia (77%)
  - Ecuador (17%)
  - Costa Rica (2.1%)
  - Thailand (1.4%)
  - Mexico (0.7%)<sup>2</sup>
- ✿ Colombia exported more than two billion flower stems and 50 types of flowers to the U.S.<sup>3</sup> in 2006.
- ✿ Since 2002, U.S. imports of Colombian flowers have risen 60%. The U.S. imported \$418 million worth of Colombian flowers in 2006.<sup>4</sup>
- ✿ The U.S. imports 70% of its cut roses, 98% of its mums and 99% of its carnations and alstroemerias from Colombia.<sup>5</sup>
- ✿ North Americans consume a total of 4-5 stems annually, while Europeans consume 30-40.<sup>6</sup>

### Colombia's Flower Economy Creates Jobs

- ✿ Almost 6,000 hectares (14,826 Acres) of land in Colombia are dedicated to cut flower production<sup>7</sup> -- generating 111,000 direct and 94,000 indirect jobs for Colombian men and women.<sup>8</sup>
- ✿ Sixty percent of the floral farm workforce consists of women heads-of-household, who live and work in rural areas located near Bogota and Medellin.<sup>9</sup>

### Colombia's Flower Exports

- ✿ In 2005, Colombia's flower exports worldwide were \$906 million.<sup>10</sup>
- ✿ Colombia is the second largest exporter of cut flowers in the world after Holland and it is the single biggest exporter of carnations in the world with a total world market share of 15%.<sup>11</sup>
- ✿ North America is Colombia's largest flower trading partner, representing 85% of Colombia flower exports.<sup>12</sup>
- ✿ Nearly 20% of the flower export business in Colombia has been owned by U.S. citizens over the past ten years.<sup>13</sup>

### Colombia and American Retailers

- ✿ Flowers grown on Colombian farms supply more than half of all supermarket floral departments in the U.S., including chains such as Wal-Mart, Kroger, Safeway and Whole Foods Market.<sup>14</sup>
- ✿ American citizens, often working with Colombian partners, own about 150 flower importer distributor companies that are mostly located in the Miami area.<sup>15</sup>

### U.S.-Colombia Bilateral Trade

- ✿ Historically, the United States has been Colombia's largest trading partner.<sup>16</sup>
- ✿ In 2006, U.S.-Colombian bilateral trade was an estimated \$14.7 billion.<sup>17</sup>
- ✿ In 2006, imports to the U.S from Colombia—which include oil, coffee, apparel and cut flowers—reached \$8.7 billion. American exports to Colombia were approximately \$6.04 billion.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign Agricultural Service FATUS database, USDA, 2006 data. Available from: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/ustrade/USTImFatus.asp?QI=>. (Accessed Jan. 24, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Flowers valued at customs.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Katz, Ph.D., "Improving Labor and Environmental Standards in the Colombian Cut Flower Industry," page 3. Available from: <http://www.johnson.cornell.edu/internationaleducation/index.cfm/>

<sup>7</sup> Katz, page 4

<sup>8</sup> Colombia's National Statistics Department, 2006 data

<sup>9</sup> Asocolflores brochure, Better Flowers for a Better World, page 3, 2004 data

<sup>10</sup> Colombian National Statistics Department (DANE in Spanish) for 2005

<sup>11</sup> Katz, page 2

<sup>12</sup> Colombia National Statistics Department, 2006 data

<sup>13</sup> Colombian-American Flower Connection, Asocolflores publication, Nov 2006

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Colombian Embassy website. Available from: [www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org) (Accessed Nov. 2006)

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, Data Dissemination Branch, Washington, D.C. 20233, data through Nov. 2006

<sup>18</sup> Ibid