

### Abstract:

Fresh-cut (minimally processed) fruit and vegetable sales have grown to approximately \$12 billion per year in the North American foodservice and retail market and account for nearly 15% of all produce sales. Fresh-cut products offer produce growers/shippers an opportunity to increase sales by adding value to raw agricultural commodities and offering consumers ready-to-eat produce that is convenient, nutritious and good tasting. The largest portion of U.S. fresh-cut produce sales at retail are fresh-cut salads, with sales of \$2.4 billion. Retail fresh-cut fruit products are the fastest growing fresh-cut produce category and it is anticipated that this segment will continue to experience significant growth in the near future. Fresh-cut fruit products have a number of food quality and safety challenges which need to be addressed before this category will come to rival retail fresh-cut salad and vegetable sales. Materials sourcing issues, increased mechanization, optimizing handling practices such as optimizing MAP systems and reducing food safety risks by development of effective preventative and intervention strategies for fresh-cut products, all warrant further investigation.