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Research and Extension Summary

The primary focus of my program is to work directly with commercial vegetable growers to enhance their ability to produce and market fresh vegetable crops. This includes both extension and applied research activities to address all aspects of vegetable production and marketing.

A focus of my program in recent years has been to identify crops that are popular among the large and growing immigrant population in the state and region. Latinos are now the largest ethnic minority in Massachusetts, outnumbering African-Americans, with over 7% of the population. Asians are expected to reach 4% of states' population by 2010. Massachusetts has the largest Portuguese-speaking population in the United States, represented by people from Portugal, Cape Verde, and in particular by a tremendous influx of Brazilians. With the growing diversity in the demographics of the state, growers are interested in taking advantage of these trends. This matches the needs of farmers who are searching for new marketing options.

My program has taken the lead on collaborative projects researching crops used by Latino, Portuguese-speaking and Asian populations in Massachusetts and the region that can be grown and marketed successfully by growers in this state. Despite the fact that many of these immigrant groups come from tropical climates, there are many crops that can be produced locally for these expanding markets. The overwhelming majority of the 20,000 acres of vegetable acreage in Massachusetts is dedicated to crops that are originally from the tropics. Examples of traditional crops grown in this state that are originally from the tropics are sweet corn (*Zea mays*), tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*), peppers (*Capsicum* spp.), and squash (*Cucurbita* spp.). Due to research and extension activities of my program, there are now commercial farmers in Massachusetts growing several crops originally from the tropics. Examples are ají dulce (*Capsicum chinense* - <http://www.worldcrops.org/crops/Aji-dulce.cfm>), calabaza (*Cucurbita moschata* - <http://www.worldcrops.org/crops/Calabaza.cfm>), jiló (*Solanum gilo* - <http://www.worldcrops.org/crops/Jilo.cfm>), and water spinach (*Ipomoea aquatica* - <http://www.worldcrops.org/crops/Water-Spinach.cfm>)

Information on ethnic crops that can be produced in the Northeast is available on a website I maintain, <http://www.worldcrops.org/> (The url's after the crops listed in the above paragraph are links to information on these crops at this website.

Information on many of my research and Extension activities is available on the UMass Vegetable Team website, <http://www.umassvegetable.org/>.