

1979 transportation charges for FF&V totaled approximately \$68,092,500. The estimated empty backhaul cost (\$6,339,408) was 1.6 percent of the retail value and 9.3 percent of the total transportation charges for Florida FF&V for April 1979.

The potential savings of \$364.90 per truck<sup>11</sup> from eliminating a technical inefficiency attributed to empty backhaul miles should therefore be realized in its entirety by the producer in terms of higher producer (farm level) prices, given the inelastic supply of fresh fruits and vegetables at the market.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the economic impact on truckers and farmers of empty truck backhauls in the transportation of Florida FF&V. To do this, it was necessary to (1) determine the average empty backhaul miles per truck in the transportation of Florida FF&V, (2) determine the total empty backhaul miles for all truck shipments during an average month in the transportation of Florida FF&V, (3) determine the interstate potential for backhauls to Florida, and (4) determine the potential reduction in transportation costs and the potential improvement in farm prices.

Empty backhaul miles per trip represented 35 percent of the average fronthaul mileage of Florida FF&V truckers. This amount represented 9.3 percent (\$6,339,408) of the average monthly FF&V transportation bill, or \$364.90 per truck trip. A reduction of empty backhaul miles to zero is virtually impossible due to imperfect knowledge of backhauls, the cost of finding backhauls, and the opportunity cost of using specialized equipment to haul general freight. However, reducing the empty backhaul mileage by 50 percent could potentially increase producer (farm level) prices \$182.45 per truckload, or 0.46 cents per pound of FF&V shipped, assuming an inelastic supply of FF&V at the market.

In conclusion, Florida's FF&V producers would benefit from reducing empty backhaul mileage and improving technical efficiency, thus alleviating the "plight" of the trucker. By reducing marketing costs, farm prices would be improved.

11. Calculated as follows: 364.9 average empty backhaul miles per truck times \$1.00 per mile [Boles, 1980, p. 10] equals \$364.90 average cost of empty backhaul miles per truck. The potential savings of \$364.90 per truck equals 0.92 cents per pound per truckload (39,479 pounds – calculated from Federal-State Market News Service).