



VEGETABLES

ACREAGE- WINTER QUARTER (JAN. FEB. MAR.)

National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

In Cooperation with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

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FLORIDA

Weather: Dry conditions over most of the Peninsula during the first two weeks in **October**, allowed fieldwork to progress on schedule. Pleasant daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s. The harvesting of sweet corn, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes and watermelons got underway with very light amounts picked. By mid-month, vegetables harvesting in central and southern Peninsula areas continued to increase slowly. Tomato picking remained active around the Quincy area, while in Dade County, growers continued to cut okra throughout the month. In Washington County, irrigated fall vegetables were in good condition. In Hillsborough County, growers started planting strawberries. Towards the end of the month, recorded temperatures at the major stations averaged from two to four degrees above normal with Miami, Orlando, Tampa and West Palm Beach setting record highs. Vegetable growers lay plastic in Hardee County. By the last week in October, a cold front crossing the State brought welcomed rains to nearly all localities. However, Homestead, Orlando, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale reported a third of an inch or less rain. The picking of beans and bell peppers got underway, while the harvesting of corn, cucumbers, eggplant, other peppers, squash and tomatoes increased with light amounts available. In Washington County, tomato and watermelon harvests were in full swing with watermelon picking winding down.

November began with measurable rain falling in southern Peninsula localities, with Miami recording nearly four and a half inches for the week; Ft. Lauderdale reported a little over two inches; Homestead, nearly an inch and two thirds; and Ft. Pierce, about a third inch. Elsewhere, most areas received no measurable rain. A very light amount of strawberries were harvested in the Plant City and Dover areas. In Washington County, watermelon producers completed fall crop harvesting while tomato picking continued at a very active pace. Other vegetables marketed included snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes. By mid-November, harvesting of fall vegetables continued to increase moderately over the central and southern Peninsula localities as growers prepared to meet the Thanksgiving Day demand. Some areas in the southern Peninsula received less than the average amount of rainfall for the season. Voluntary cut back on water usage was requested to ensure there was enough water for various uses, including crop irrigation. Warm days and mostly cool evenings aided crop development, which allowed field activities to progress on schedule. During the latter part of November, two cold fronts crossing the State brought chilly temperatures to nearly all areas. The cool temperatures slowed plant growth and fruit maturation in most areas. However, the dry conditions allowed planting and harvesting to proceed on schedule. Strawberry picking around Plant City and Dover and the harvesting of escarole, endive, and lettuce around Lake Okeechobee increased slowly with very light amounts marketed. Other vegetables marketed included snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes.

December started with mostly favorable conditions, which allowed planting and harvesting to stay on schedule. Growers in Alachua County finished harvesting snap beans with growers experiencing stem rot disease on some acreage. Strawberry growers in Hillsborough County were slightly behind schedule due to the continuous temperature changes. Growers needed cooler temperatures to aid maturation and berry development. Growers started marketing light shipments of strawberries. Light harvesting of endive and escarole got underway. By mid-December, warmer temperatures around Immokalee, Homestead, Balm, and Ft. Pierce helped the growth and development of vegetables with harvesting for the holiday market in full swing. Towards the end of the month, drier weather over the southern Peninsula kept most planting and harvesting on schedule. Vegetables being marketed included snap beans, cabbage, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes. Very light amounts of celery, okra, and parsley were also shipped.

SNAP BEANS: Winter harvested acreage is forecast at 12,400 acres, down 6 percent from last year. Harvest started by the fourth week in October with very light movement reported. Mostly mild conditions during October through December allowed growers to keep winter crop planting on schedule.

CABBAGE: Producers expect to harvest 4,300 acres through March, up 400 acres or 10 percent, above last year's revised 3,900 acres harvested. Harvesting in central and southern Peninsula areas started by the second week of December with producers marketing very light amounts.

SWEET CORN: Harvested acreage is forecast at 7,000 acres, up 3,400 acres or 94 percent, from last year's freeze damaged revised 3,600 acres harvested as the winter crop. Harvesting began by mid-October and marketing activity continued during November and December.

BELL PEPPERS: Winter harvested acreage is forecast at 6,100 acres, unchanged from last year's revised acreage. Collier County growers were still planting peppers by the fourth week in October. Bell pepper picking got underway between the end of October and beginning of November, with light amounts marketed.

STRAWBERRIES: Area expected to be harvested is forecast at 7,500 acres, up 200 acres or 3 percent, from last year's revised 7,300 acres harvested. Producers started transplanting at the end of September with virtually all planting completed by the end of October. Cooler temperatures at the end of October through all of November increased the quality of the berries. However, very warm temperatures for most of December adversely affected berry quality. Very light harvesting started in early November with a moderate amount available for the Thanksgiving Day market. Picking increased steadily as more acreage reached maturity in December.

TOMATOES: Winter tomato acreage is forecast at 10,000 acres, down 1,000 acres or 9 percent, from last year's 11,000 acres harvested. By the third week in October, tomato picking was active in the Quincy area and has started in some southern Peninsula areas. Towards the end of November, tomato picking was gaining momentum in the Palmetto-Ruskin, Immokalee, and East Coast areas, while in the Quincy region tomato picking was decreasing. Mostly mild conditions in November and December allowed harvest to proceed on schedule.

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 179,200 acres. This is unchanged from 2006 but 3 percent below 2005. Acreage declined for snap beans, carrots, celery, head lettuce, spinach, and tomatoes. Acreage increased for broccoli, cabbage, and sweet corn. Cauliflower and bell peppers remain the same.

CABBAGE: Winter acreage for harvest is forecast at 10,800 acres, 2 percent above 2006 but down 14 percent from 2005. In Florida, mostly mild conditions during October through December allowed planting to proceed on schedule. Light harvest started by mid-December. In Texas, heavy rainfall in the Lower Valley during September caused flooding and seed washouts that kept the cabbage crop from getting a good start. Some fields had to be transplanted instead of grown from seed.

CELERY: The winter celery crop for harvest in California is forecast at 6,800 acres, down 6 percent from last year and 9 percent below the year before. The winter celery crop is in good condition with no pest or disease problems reported.

HEAD LETTUCE: Area for harvest is forecast at 65,000 acres, down 2 percent from last year and 4 percent below the year before. In Florida, the growing and harvest season has been significantly affected by below average and freezing temperatures. These temperatures resulted in delayed harvest with the crop suffering from frost damage, epidermal peeling, and smaller head sizes. In California, lettuce fields are in various stages of growth. Growers had to treat their crop to control insects. There are concerns that mildew may affect the crop by causing smaller head sizes, lower yields, and reduced quality.

SELECTED FRESH MARKET VEGETABLES AND STRAWBERRIES: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and Total, Winter Season, 2005-2006 and Forecasted Area 2007

| Selected crops and States | Usual harvest period | Winter acreage | | | 2007 area for harvest as percent of 2006 |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------|------------------|--|
| | | Harvested | | For harvest 2007 | |
| | | 2005 | 2006 | | |
| | | Acres | | | Percent |
| SNAP BEANS: | | | | | |
| Florida | Jan-Mar | 12,500 | 13,200 | 12,400 | 94 |
| CABBAGE: | | | | | |
| Florida | Jan-Mar | 5,000 | 3,900 | 4,300 | 110 |
| Texas | Dec-Mar | 7,600 | 6,700 | 6,500 | 97 |
| Total | | 12,600 | 10,600 | 10,800 | 102 |
| SWEET CORN: | | | | | |
| Florida | Jan-Mar | 7,800 | 3,600 | 7,000 | 194 |
| BELL PEPPER: ^{1/} | | | | | |
| Florida | Jan-Mar | 6,300 | 6,100 | 6,100 | 100 |
| TOMATOES: | | | | | |
| Florida | Jan-Mar | 12,500 | 11,000 | 10,000 | 91 |
| CARROTS: | | | | | |
| California | Jan-Mar | 18,000 | 20,000 | 19,300 | 97 |
| Texas | Dec-Mar | 1,500 | 1,200 | 1,000 | 83 |
| Total | | 19,500 | 21,200 | 20,300 | 96 |
| HEAD LETTUCE: | | | | | |
| Arizona--Western | Nov-Apr | 49,600 | 47,600 | 46,000 | 97 |
| California | Jan-Mar | 18,000 | 19,000 | 19,000 | 100 |
| Total | | 67,600 | 66,600 | 65,000 | 98 |
| BROCCOLI: ^{1/} | | | | | |
| California | Jan-Mar | 27,000 | 28,500 | 30,000 | 105 |
| CAULIFLOWER: ^{1/} | | | | | |
| California | Jan-Mar | 8,500 | 9,000 | 9,000 | 100 |
| CELERY: ^{1/} | | | | | |
| California | Jan-Mar | 7,500 | 7,200 | 6,800 | 94 |
| SPINACH: | | | | | |
| Texas | Dec-Mar | 2,100 | 2,200 | 1,800 | 82 |
| TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED | | | | | |
| Florida | | 44,100 | 37,800 | 39,800 | 105 |
| United States | | 183,900 | 179,200 | 179,200 | 100 |
| STRAWBERRIES: ^{1/} | | | | | |
| Florida | Dec-May | 7,300 | 7,300 | 7,500 | 103 |

^{1/} Includes fresh market and processing.