

# Vegetables - 2006

**2006 Vegetable Season:** A mild winter, favorable weather in early spring, thunder storms followed by dry conditions in early summer, and late fall wet weather, all had varying effects on the vegetable crops this growing season. Planting and harvesting were on schedule, but the planting intentions were lower than usual because of concerns about rising fuel and labor costs. Yield and quality were generally good for spring vegetables. Summer planting was lower than last year. Early summer high temperatures and adequate moisture were beneficial to summer crops, but frequent thunder storms caused some acreage loss. The tomato crop was hurt the most, and yield was almost at disaster level. Fall planting was lower than usual because of unstable weather conditions in late summer. As the season concluded, production of asparagus, cabbage, collards, cucumbers, bell peppers, pumpkins, spinach, and sweet corn were higher, while eggplant, escarole and endive, kale, lettuce, snap beans, summer squash, winter squash, and tomatoes had lower production. Total value of production of all principal fresh market vegetables and processing vegetables showed a 12 percent and 11 percent increase, respectively.

**Vegetables for Fresh Market:** There are 17 fresh market vegetables in the USDA-NASS, New Jersey Field Office estimating program. Area harvested for these fresh market vegetables in 2006 totaled 31,200 acres, compared with 32,500 acres in 2005, down 1,300 acres. Production amounted to 4.77 million hundredweight, an increase of 7 percent from the 4.45 million hundredweight produced in 2005. Overall yield in 2006 averaged 153 hundredweight per acre, up 16 hundredweight from the previous year. Season average price was \$27.30 per hundredweight compared with \$26.20 in 2005, up \$1.10 per hundredweight.

Among the fresh market vegetables, cucumbers and eggplant had higher harvested acres in 2006 than in 2005. Harvested acres remained unchanged for escarole & endive, other lettuce, and bell peppers. Asparagus, cabbage, collards, kale, head lettuce, pumpkins, snap beans, spinach, summer squash, winter squash, sweet corn, and tomatoes had lower harvested acres in 2006 than in 2005. The higher yield was enough to offset the lower harvested acres, resulting in a higher total production than a year ago. The value of production showed an increase of \$13.9 million, as the result of higher season average price and production.

Ranking New Jersey's fresh market vegetables by value of production, bell peppers were first with \$27.8 million, and tomatoes were second with \$19.6 million. Sweet corn, cucumbers, and spinach were third, fourth, and fifth with \$19.0 million, \$13.4 million, and \$10.0 million, respectively.

**Vegetables for Processing:** In 2006, harvested acreage of the eight major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, lima beans, snap beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) totaled 7,500 acres, compared with 8,250 acres in 2005. Harvested acres increased for snap beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Carrot acres remained the same, while acreage declined for the remaining processing vegetables. Total production, at 55,970 tons, was an 8 percent decrease from the 61,150 tons in 2005. The season average price was \$151.70 per ton, compared with \$125.50 per ton in 2005, up \$26.20 per ton. The 2006 value of production, at \$8.49 million, was up 11 percent from \$7.67 million in 2005.