

Vegetables

Conditions were continually wet throughout the entire growing season. The weather had varying effects upon different types of vegetables.

Spring planting started out early because temperatures were above normal and topsoil moisture was adequate. The quality of spring vegetables was generally good. Wet conditions in late spring adversely affected harvest of spring vegetables and interrupted planting for summer crops. Frequent rain and wet conditions continued into the summer months. Some crops benefitted from the abundant moisture, while other crops suffered losses. Fall planting acreage was lower than the normal level due to wet fields, but fall harvest was normal and the quality of crops was generally good. Production of asparagus, collards, kale, pumpkins, and spinach were significantly lower, while cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, escarole and endive, leaf and Romaine lettuce, bell peppers, snap beans, squash, sweet corn, and tomatoes had higher production. As the season concluded, total acres harvested of all principal vegetables (both fresh market and processed) showed a 5 percent increase, while total production showed a 4 percent increase from the previous year.

There are 17 fresh market vegetables in the New Jersey Field Office estimating program. Area harvested for these fresh market vegetables in 2004 totaled 33,800 acres, compared with 33,900 acres in 2003, down 100 acres. Production amounted to 5 million hundredweight, an increase of 5 percent from the 4.74 million hundredweight produced in 2003. Overall yield in 2004 averaged 148 hundredweight per acre, up 8 hundredweight per acre from the previous year. Season

average price was \$25.90 per hundredweight compared with \$26.40 in 2003, down \$0.50 per hundredweight.

Among the fresh market vegetables, cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, snap bean, spinach, summer squash and winter squash had higher harvested acres in 2004 than in 2003. Asparagus, and kale acres remained the same, while the remaining vegetable acres declined. Despite the decline of acreage and season average price, the higher production was enough to offset the decreases and the value of production increased \$4.11 million to a total of \$130 million.

In terms of harvested acreage, fresh market sweet corn came in first with 7,500 acres. Fresh market bell peppers were second with 3,500 acres, and ranking third were snap beans and cucumbers with 3,100 acres each.

Harvested acreage in 2004 of the eight major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, lima beans, snap beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) totaled 9,100 acres, compared with 7,000 acres harvested in 2003 and 11,600 acres harvested in 2002. Harvested acres increased for most of crops with the exception of carrots and cucumbers which remained the same, and snap beans which showed a decline. Total production, at 65,970 tons, was an increase of 26 percent from 52,460 tons in 2003. The season average price was \$126.10 per ton, compared with \$141.40 per ton in 2003; down \$15.30 per ton. The 2004 value of production at \$8.32 million was up 12 percent from \$7.42 million in 2003.