



Fruits

Apples

Apple production in the Commonwealth totaled 220 million pounds in 2006, 30 million pounds less than 2005 and 80 million pounds below 2004. The growing season began with mild winter temperatures and below average precipitation. Bud and bloom development was on schedule with rare occurrences of late season frost or freeze. Pollination was good and fruit set was about normal. May began with good topsoil moisture; however, conditions became very dry throughout June over most of the production region. Relief from widespread rains came the first week of July. August was somewhat dry and hot while timely rains during September brought relief to the crop. Harvest was on schedule with few weather delays.

Peaches

The 2006 season began with a very mild winter, but a cool spring. Bloom and fruit set was good; however, lingering cool temperatures impacted pollination. Dry weather during May and June caused some problems with sizing and quality. Rainfall was localized during the season while it appears that most of the production region received enough precipitation for a good crop. Some areas were good on moisture during the season but July and August tended to be

very dry. Growers harvested 4,000 tons of peaches in 2006 compared with 4,700 tons in 2005 and 4,500 tons in 2004.

Grapes

Grape production in Virginia increased in 2006 with the production of Vinifera varieties accounting for the majority of the overall production. Producers harvested a crop valued at \$8.6 million, receiving an average price of \$1,440 per ton.

Virginia ranked 8th nationally in commercial grape production and 9th for bearing acreage. Virginia's grape producers harvested 6,200 tons of commercial grapes in 2006, up 11 percent from the 5,600 tons produced in 2005.

Virginia bearing acreage increased from 2,000 acres in 2005 to 2,100 acres in 2006, a 5 percent increase over that time span.

The Chardonnay variety made up 23 percent of Virginia's total Vinifera production harvested in 2006. Also, Virginia's most popular variety accounted for 26 percent of all the Vinifera variety bearing acreage and 20 percent of the total vineyard acreage statewide. Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon represented the top four varieties

produced in the Commonwealth in 2006. Chardonnay producers harvested 56 tons less in 2006 compared to 2005. Cabernet Franc producers harvested 44 tons more in 2006, and Merlot producers harvested 49 tons less in 2006. Also, Cabernet Sauvignon producers harvested 30 more tons in 2006 compared to 2005.

The 2006 growing season started with a mild winter with little or no indication of any winter injury for the majority of vineyards. Several areas received rain in May, but remained relatively dry up through July. Some producers south of the James River and in Southeast Virginia experienced problems with poor fruit set in June due to stress brought on by the hot and dry weather during bloom. There were also complaints of wildlife and bees damaging crops more than usual in 2006. In late August, Tropical Storm Ernesto was a problem for some producers that were expecting a quick, dry harvest. The precipitation from Ernesto, along with the frequency of rains in September and October, made it difficult for some producers growing late maturing reds, but overall reports of fruit quality were very high across the state. Despite the problems growers encountered, the 2006 growing season surpassed 2005 with the largest crop produced in Virginia grown on the largest amount of bearing acreage.