

FRUIT

Freezing temperatures in latter May virtually eliminated production in certain sections of the fruit producing region, while other areas seemed to produce at more normal levels. In the 2002 growing season, rainfall returned to more typical levels from the previous growing season. Overall, the state's total apple production, at 95 million pounds, was comparable to the previous two season's production.

Low processing prices drove West Virginia's overall apple price to the lowest price per pound received in the nation. For the last few seasons, West Virginia producers have received some of the lowest estimated apple prices per pound. Consequently, since 2000, bearing acreage has shown a 500 acre decline and unharvested production remained high.

West Virginia's peach crop, at 10 million pounds, was equally regarded as good by most industry contacts. May's freezing temperatures and some reports of isolated hail damage limited the crop, but overall, yields were reported at near normal levels. Price per pound showed an increase of one cent above the 2001 crop and 5.4 cents above the price received in 2000.

Nationally, total apple production was estimated at 8.59 billion pounds, down 9 percent from 2001. Total peach production (including California Clingstone) was estimated at 2.58 billion pounds, up 6 percent from 2001.