

Irrigation Activities Increase Due to Dry Weather

Days suitable for field work, for the week ending Sunday, July 4, 2004, were 6.6. There were measurable amounts of rainfall during the week across most of the state, but the majority of the reporting weather stations received under a half inch of rain. Temperatures across the state were below normal the beginning of the week, and near normal the end of the week. Soil moisture was rated 80% short and 20% adequate. Farmers were busy planting soybeans, top dressing corn, harvesting, spraying, baling straw, cutting hay, and renovating strawberry beds. Wheat combining continued, and approached 80% in central and southern districts. There was a report that wheat yields were lower than expected in the southern district. Field corn began to tassel in some southern fields. Hot and dry conditions were stressing some corn fields. Soybeans began to bloom, and there was a report of spider mites in some fields in the central district. The second cutting of other hay harvest began in the southern district. Hay regrowth was stunted due to lack of available moisture. There was a report of leafhoppers in alfalfa hay in the central district. Vegetables were rated in mostly good condition. Irrigation of vegetable fields increased in response to warm and dry weather conditions. Harvest of cabbage, zucchini, and yellow squash continued across the state. In central and southern localities, cucumber, tomato, and snap bean harvest continued. Sweet corn harvest continued in central fields. Pepper harvest began in some southern fields, and harvest of leaf lettuces, leeks, cilantro, spinach, beets, basil, mint, onions, parsley, and eggplant continued. Peaches were thinned in some orchards in the central district. Blueberry harvest was in full swing with great berry quality reported. In the central district, apples were sizing well; and there was a report of moderate amounts of cedar apple rust, fire blight, and tufted apple budmoth. Grape crop was reported as being in good condition. Favorable weather conditions boosted milk production.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR JULY 6, 2004

Acorn Squash – Harvest just started. A light volume of good quality product available.

Baby Arugula & Baby Spinach – Harvesting in good quality and volume. Not as affected by the heat.

Basil – Harvesting good quality and volume.

Beets – Harvesting good quality and fair volume.

Blueberries – Duke variety finished. Bluecrop variety being harvested in good quantity. Fruit quality and size for all varieties is excellent. The season may be finished by the end of the month.

Cabbage – Good quality Red, Savoy, and Green being harvested in major quantities.

Cantaloupes – Began harvesting late last week. Good quality and fair volume now with good volume available by the end of the week.

Cilantro – Harvesting good quality and volume.

Cucumbers – Harvesting good quality and volume.

Dandelions - Spring planted Pasquale variety available in good volume.

Dill & Spinach - Harvesting fair to good quality of Spinach and Dill in decreasing volume with the increased temperatures.

Eggplant – Planted a bit later this year due to wet and cool spring conditions, they've ripened early. The harvest of very good quality product has begun in light volume with volume increasing each week.

Escarole/Endive – Harvesting a fair to decreasing volume of fair to good quality product.

Green Onions – Good quality and fair to good volume.

Greens - Good quality and fair quantities seen of Collards, Kholrabi, Kale, Mustard, Broccoli Raab, and Swiss Chard.

Leeks – Good quality spring planted being harvested in good volume.

Lettuces – Harvesting Romaine in fair quality and decreasing volume. A bit of leaf lettuce around also. Finishing up soon with the warm temperatures.

Parsley – Good quality and quantity of spring planted available.

Peaches – All varieties are tracking for earlier than normal harvesting and excellent quality is expected due to the nice mix of sun and occasional rain that we've been receiving. Harvest of the early yellow variety Sentry just started with volume expected next week. The early white variety White Lady is expected around the third week of July with volume by the end of the month.

Peppers – Planted a bit later this year due to wet and cool spring conditions, they've ripened early. Harvesting very good quality product in fair volume with volume increasing each week.

Pickles (Kirby cucumbers) – Good quality and quantity available.

Squashes – Good quality Yellow and Zucchini are being harvested in good quantities.

Sweet Corn – Harvesting very good quality and good volume. Peak of season should be around July 20th. Good wholesale availability until at least the week after Labor Day. Quantity and quality varies after that due to fall insect pressures.

Tomatoes – Tomatoes were planted a week or two later this year due to cool and wet spring planting conditions yet the field grown harvest started a week or two earlier than usual due to a lack of early frost exposure and favorable growing conditions. We'll have a good quantity of very good quality product available this week. Plum tomato harvest has also started in light volume with similar very good quality.

White Potatoes - Redskin variety will start being harvested by the end of the week with Superior round variety starting a week or so later. There will be a large crop of good quality potatoes this year. Source your New Jersey white potatoes in their distinctive "Jersey Fresh" bags. A number of chain stores have made large displays of these and they've sold quite well.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Butternut Squash – Normally planted for early fall harvest, growers planted them even earlier this year for mid July harvest when there's less supply and better prices to farmers. Should begin sometime late next week.

Nectarines – The early variety Eastern Glo is expected around the third week of July with volume by the end of the month.