

Soaking Rains Needed

Days suitable for field work for the week ending Sunday, July 11, 2004, were 6.6. There were measurable amounts of rainfall during the week across most of the state, but most weather stations reported rainfall of under a half inch. Temperatures across the state were above normal during the week. Soil moisture was rated 85% short and 15% adequate. Farmers were busy planting soybeans, top dressing corn, harvesting, spraying, baling straw, and cutting hay. Many fields were irrigated to compensate for the lack of rainfall. Wheat harvest was 90% complete in central and southern districts. Most corn fields were heat stressed with leaves rolling up in response to dry weather. Second hay cutting growth was stunted the heat and absence of rainfall. Pumpkin and potato vine growth were vigorous in response to the warm weather. Blueberry harvest was 65% with excellent berry quality reported. Dry weather conditions helped sweeten peaches as harvest of early maturing varieties were underway. Pastures were dry and turning brown due to lack of rainfall.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR JULY 12, 2004

Acorn Squash – Harvest started last week. A light to fair 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 – Downside of the season. Bluecrop variety being harvested in fair to declining volume and finishing up next week. The late variety Elliott is starting this week and will be available for a few weeks. Fruit quality and size for all varieties is excellent. The season should be finished by the end of the month.

Butternut Squash – Normally a fall item, growers planted them earlier this year for harvest when there's less supply and better prices to farmers. Should begin harvest this week.

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

Cantaloupes – Good quality and fair to good volume.

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. Harvesting very good quality product in fair 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 and flavor are due to the nice mix of sun and occasional rain that we've been receiving. Harvest of the early yellow variety Sentry started last week with volume expected later this week. The early white variety White Lady is expected next week 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 to good volume by the end of the 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 the season should be next week. 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 started earlier than usual due to a lack of early frost exposure and favorable growing conditions. Good quantity and very good quality product available this week. Plum tomatoes are available in fair to increasing volume with similar very good quality.

White Potatoes - Redskin variety being harvested with Superior round variety starting later this week. 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

Nectarines – The early variety Eastern Glo is expected sometime late next week with volume by the end of the month.

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