

Rains Damaged New Jersey Cranberry Crop

Days suitable for field work for the week ending Sunday, July 18, 2004, were 3.0. Each Rutgers Cooperative Extension weather reporting station had rainfall measurements of over three inches as of 8:00 AM for the week ending July 19, 2004. Stations in central New Jersey reported receiving up to 12 inches on Monday, July 12, 2004. Temperatures across the state were below normal during the week. Soil moisture was rated 39% adequate and 61% surplus. Heavy rainfall limited field activities, but there was some vegetable harvesting and spraying where field conditions allowed. Rainfall was needed on most field corn and soybean fields due to dry and hot conditions prevailing the previous three or four weeks. Some soybean fields were submerged underwater in central portions of the state due to the heavy rains. Spider mite activity was reported in some soybean fields. Rains lowered hay quality and forage production in many localities. Heavy rains flooded some vegetable fields and washed out some pumpkins and snap bean fields. Muddy fields prevented vegetable harvest in many areas, especially in centrally located counties. Blueberry harvest neared completion in most fields with berries rated good to excellent in both size and flavor. The cranberry crop was heavily damaged by rainfall. The extent of this damage was still being assessed. The apple crop in the northern district was sizing nicely, and crop condition was rated excellent. Rainfall improved pasture condition across most of the state; but localized heavy rains increased the threat of hoof disease in cattle herds.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR JULY 19, 2004

Acorn Squash - 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 - Tail end of the season. Bluecrop variety being harvested in declining volume and finishing up this week. The late variety Elliott 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 or so.

Butternut Squash - Normally a Fall item, growers planted them earlier this year for harvest when there's less supply and better prices to farmers. Harvest beginning this week in light volume.

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

Cantaloupes - Good quality and 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 good volume.

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 volume 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. Finishing up.

Nectarines - The early varieties Eastern Glo and June Glo are being harvested in light though increasing quantities with the Summer Beaut variety starting as well. The desirable Sunglo variety should start this weekend with volume expected early next month. All fruit finish and quality is very good. Fruit size will be mostly the 2¼" and 2½" sizes.

Parsley - Good quality and quantity of spring planted available.

Peaches - All varieties are being harvested earlier than normal and excellent quality and flavor are due to the nice mix of sun and occasional rain that we've been receiving. Fruit size will be mostly the 2½" and 2¾" sizes. Harvest of the early yellow variety Sentry is finishing up. The Redhaven varieties began being harvested this past weekend and volume should be available by this weekend. The early white variety White Lady is expected to begin harvesting later this week with volume by the beginning of next week. The new white peach varieties have the look and flavor that consumers desire and the shelf life that allows you to get the peaches to them.

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

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. 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 available this week. Plum tomatoes are also available in fair to good volume with similar very good quality.

White Potatoes - Redskin and Superior round varieties being harvested. 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.