

Cooler Temperatures Slowed Tomato Ripening

Days suitable for field work for the week ending Sunday, August 1, 2004, were 4.7. Temperatures across the state were variable during the week. There were measurable amounts of rainfall for the week across most of the state. Soil moisture was rated 38% adequate and 62% surplus. Fieldwork included baling hay, vegetable harvesting, picking fruit, and spraying herbicides. Spider mite activity was reported in some soybean fields in the central district. Rains lowered hay quality and forage production in many localities and made harvest activities challenging. There was a report of leaf spot problems in alfalfa hay fields in the central district. Harvest of beets, carrots, cantaloupe, peppers, tomatoes, sweet corn, eggplant, red and green cabbage, Swiss chard, kale, collards, dill, mint, basil, parsley, cilantro, leeks, green onions, squash, and zucchini continued in the southern district. Disease problems were reported, including downy mildew and phytophthora blight. In some central localities, leaf diseases were reported on tomatoes, cucumbers and cantaloupes, and downy mildew, leaf spot disease, and phytophthora blight on pumpkins. The cooler temperatures slowed tomato ripening in the northern district. Potato harvest was slowed in some locations by the weather. Peach harvest continued, and apples were sizing well in the northern district. Increased threat of hoof disease in cattle herds remained strong.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR AUGUST 2, 2004

Acorn & Spaghetti Squash - Harvesting a fair to good volume of good quality product.

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

Basil - Harvesting good quality and volume.

Beets - Harvesting good quality and fair volume.

Blueberries - Last commercial week of the season. The late variety Elliott will be available in minimal volume. Fruit quality and size are good.

Butternut Squash - Normally a fall item, growers planted them earlier this year for harvest when there's less supply and better prices to farmers. Harvesting a fair to good volume of good quality product.

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.

Nectarines - The early variety Summer Beaut is being harvested in declining volume while the desirable Sunglo variety is being harvested in increasing volume. Good volume is expected by next week. All fruit finish and quality is very good. Fruit size will be mostly the 2 ¼" and 2 ½" sizes.

Parsley & Mint - Good quality and quantity available.

Peaches - All varieties are being harvested earlier than normal with excellent quality and flavor due to the nice weather mix that we've been receiving. Fruit size is increasing now with mostly 2 ½" size fruit though with an increasing volume of 2 ¾" size fruit. The yellow Redhaven varieties are being harvested in good volume. John Boy variety peaches are also being harvested in fair to good volume with Bounty variety just starting to be picked. The early white variety White Lady is being harvested in good volume and should be around for another two weeks. The new white 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 good volume with similar very good quality.

White Potatoes - The Redskin variety Norland and Superior round white varieties being harvested. There is 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.