

Spring Vegetable Harvest Continues

Days suitable for field work were 4.5. There were measurable amounts of rainfall during the week across most of the state. Temperatures were below normal in most areas of the state the start of the week, but rose to above normal by the end of the week. Soil moisture was rated 95% adequate and 5% surplus. Irrigation water supplies were rated 93% adequate and 7% surplus. Farmers were busy fertilizing, top dressing hay fields, plowing, and planting where field conditions allowed. Small grain crops were rated in good condition. Alfalfa hay fields continued to green up. There was a report of weevils in alfalfa hay fields in the south. Sweet corn planting under plastic cover continued. Greenhouse grown lettuce was transplanted in some southern localities. Eggplant, cucumbers, cantaloupe and peppers remained in greenhouses in the north. Cabbage, lettuce and tomato transplanting continued in the south. Asparagus and spinach harvest was active across the state. Leeks, onions, kale, radishes, arugula, cilantro, and parsley were harvested in southern areas of the state. Planting of peas were near completion in the south. Peaches and apples were rated in mostly good condition. Apples were in full bloom in the north, while in southern localities petals began to fall. Peaches began to shuck in the north. Blueberries began to bloom in the south. In some areas of the south strawberry plants had fifty percent stand. Grape plants had started to leaf out in some southern localities. Milk production was enhanced by adequate pastures forage in most areas.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR MAY 3, 2004

Arugula – Being harvested in light volume. Baby Arugula available in light volume.

Asparagus – With the warming temperatures, it's now being harvested in good volume. We should be at the peak of the season by next week.

Cilantro & Parsley – A little bit of over-wintered product is still available but finishing up. Spring planted should be available in several weeks.

Dandelions - Over-wintered product is finishing up. Spring planted available by late May.

Green Onions & Leeks – A small volume of over-wintered product is still available.

Lettuces – Harvesting Boston, Red and Green Leaf lettuces in light volume. Romaine being harvested in Vineland area in minimal quantities. All should increase over the next several weeks.

Radishes – Being harvested at peak volume now.

Spinach – A small volume of good quality over-wintered product is still available but finishing up. Spring planted should be available by mid-May. Baby Spinach available later this week.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Beets – Harvest should begin around the third week of May.

Cabbage – Won't be ready until late May or early June.

Collards – Harvest should begin around the third week of May.

Dill - Should be available by the third week of May.

Escarole/Endive – Should begin harvesting around the end of May.

Iceberg Lettuce –Should be available by the third week in May.

Strawberries –Sweet Charlie berries were picked on Saturday to start the season and are available in minimal quantities. The Chandler variety berries should begin this weekend, weather permitting. Jersey Fresh berries are picked ripe, have more red interior color, and a larger berry size since they're physically more mature. They're a better quality and better tasting berry.

The bulk of our berries will be harvested towards the end of May, with lower volumes to continue through the first week of June. Unfortunately, Winter was very hard on the plugs that were planted last summer. It seems that we have lost a significant amount of our expected '04 production.

Turnips – Should begin harvesting around the third week of May.

