

Heat Accelerates Vegetable Harvest

Days suitable for field work, for the week ending Sunday, May 23, 2004, were 5.5. There were measurable amounts of rainfall during the week across most of the state. Temperatures were above normal across the state for the week. Soil moisture was rated 6% short, 87% adequate, and 7% surplus. Irrigation water supplies were rated 95% adequate and 5% surplus. Farmers were busy fertilizing, cultivating, plowing, planting, spraying, and pruning. Barley and wheat were thirty percent headed out in the northern district. Soybean planting continued across the state. Field corn planting continued in some southern fields, as field corn continued to emerge. There was a report of slugs in no-till corn in the south. In most localities, hay was too wet to begin cutting; and there was a report that in some southern fields hay had gone down due to wet weather and excessive growth. Vegetables were reported as being in mostly good condition, with some irrigation of vegetables in the south. Sweet corn planting continued in central counties; while in some southern fields, sweet corn planted under plastic had started to silk. Transplanting of eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes continued in the south. Cucumbers planted under plastic began to emerge in some southern fields. Cantaloupe planting commenced in the central district; while in some southern fields cantaloupe plants started to flower. Spinach planting neared completion in central locations. Harvest of green and red lettuces, spinach, peas, cilantro, leeks, beets, basil, baby arugula, squash, and zucchini continued in the south. There were reports of heat damage to lettuce, spinach, and peas in some southern localities. Irish potato vines were reported in fair to good condition, with a report that in some low spots the vines had rotted. Sweetpotato planting commenced in some central and southern fields. Peaches and apples were rated in good condition in the central district. Cranberry bogs have been drained, but plants were not yet in bloom. Strawberries were rated as being in fair to excellent condition across the state. Blueberry crop condition ratings were good to excellent. Grape plants were in bloom in the south, and it was reported the blooms were being sprayed. There was a report of cicadas in some nursery areas in the central district. Livestock producers were aggressively rotating pastures to maximize growth of grasses this season.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR MAY 24, 2004

Arugula & Baby Arugula - Being harvested in good quality and volume.

Asparagus - Good quality is being harvested in good, though decreasing, volume. With prices down due to imports, and temperatures up, the harvest decreased each week for the last 2-3 weeks of the season.

Beets - Harvesting good quality and fair volume.

Cabbage - Good quality Red and Savoy being harvested in light quantities. Green just starting to be picked. Will increase in volume each week.

Cilantro - Spring planted is now available in good volume.

Collards - Should be harvested in minimal volume later this week.

Dandelions - Spring planted Pasquale variety available in good volume.

Dill - Harvesting good quality and volume.

Escarole/Endive - Harvesting a good volume of good quality Endive. Escarole is now being harvested in good quality and fair minimal volume.

Green Onions & Leeks - A small volume of over-wintered product is still available. Transplanted leeks should be available by early June. Spring planted varieties due in July.

Lettuces - Harvesting fair to good quality lettuces in good volume.

Parsley - Good quality spring planted available in light quantity.

Pickles (Kirby cucumbers) - Good quality and light quantity available with volume increasing each week.

Radishes - Good quality and fair volume being harvested.

Spinach & Baby Spinach - Fair to good quality and fair volume available. Finishing up spring season.

Squashes - Good quality Yellow and Zucchini being harvested in light quantities.

Strawberries - Fair to good quality Chandler berries are available in decreasing volume as the season comes to a close. High temperatures cause the remainder of the crop to ripen together.

Turnips - Just began harvesting good quality in light volume.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Basil - Should be available by the end of the week.

Blueberries - Early varieties like Weymouth beginning in mid June. Volume available 7-10 days later. Duke variety starting around June 21 with volume a week later. Bluecrop variety after that.

Cantaloupes - Become available in late June. Volume available at beginning of July.

Cucumbers - Should begin harvesting later this week with volume increasing each week.

Iceberg Lettuce - Should be available by the end of the month.

Peppers and Eggplant - Planted a little bit later this year due to wet and cool spring conditions, harvest will begin about the third week of July. Volume increasing each week thereafter.

Sweet Corn - Harvest should begin the last week of June. Good quality and fair quantity expected for the 4th of July. 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 - Field grown begins 3rd week of June with limited quantities and higher prices. Volume available at beginning to mid-July.

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