

Field Activities Progress with Dryer Weather Conditions

Days suitable for field work, for the week ending Sunday, April 17, 2005, were 6.6. Topsoil moisture was rated 20% short, 65% adequate and 15% surplus. Irrigation water supply was rated 85% adequate and 15% surplus. There was no measurable amount of rainfall during the week across most of the state. Temperatures were below normal in most areas of the state for much of the week. Agricultural producers continued field preparation for spring crops as fields dried out, along with some irrigation in localities where the surface soil had dried out. Other activities included equipment repair, fertilizing, tending greenhouses, laying plastic mulch, and transplanting greenhouse crops. Vegetable and potato planting continued, and there was some harvest of cilantro and parsley. Pruning and spraying of fruit trees continued, and growers thinned blossoms. Small grains and hay crops were rated in mostly fair condition. Development of hay crop and pasture was running late due to recent wet and cool conditions. There was a report from the central district of some freeze injury and goose damage to small grain crops, but little winter damage of fruit buds or foliage. Peach trees started to bloom in southern localities, but apple trees were not quite in bloom. Strawberry plants began to display late bloom in the southern district.

JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR APRIL 18, 2005

Cilantro - A little bit of over-wintered product is available now and for at least 2-3 more weeks. Spring planted should be available by the third week of May.

Dandelions - Over-wintered product is available now and for some time. Spring planted should be available by mid-May.

Leeks - A small volume of over-wintered product is available now and for some time.

Spinach - A small volume of over-wintered product is available now and for another 2-3 weeks or so. Spring planted should be available by mid-May.

JERSEY FRESH FORECAST

Arugula - Should start being harvested next week in minimal volume. Volume should pick up each week after that.

Asparagus - Already peeking out of the ground 2-3 inches. With warmer weather this week, the harvest should begin in the next week to ten days. Volume should begin in 2-3 weeks.

Beets - Just transplanted recently. Harvest should begin in another month or so.

Cabbage - Just transplanted recently. Won't be ready until late May or early June.

Collards - Should begin harvesting 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.

Lettuce - Should begin harvesting Romaine and Boston around the third week of May.

Parsley - Over-wintered product will be available in mid-May.

Radishes - Harvest should begin next week. Volume should pick up in two weeks.

Strawberries - We grow the same Chandler variety as grown in California, with one exception. Jersey Fresh berries are picked when ripe and can arrive in our region's markets quicker and fresher than the competition. Our berries have more red interior color than white since they're physically more mature and ripe. They're grown in raised beds, under black plastic, with a large berry size, good interior color, and excellent taste. They're a better quality and better tasting product than berries from elsewhere. One chain was selling them at almost twice the price as other berries last year and could not keep them in stock.

Due to this winter's colder weather, the season is running just a bit late. Early harvests are expected to begin in mid-May, while the bulk of the crop will be harvested towards the end of May, with lower volumes to continue through the first week of June.

Turnips - Should begin harvesting around the end of May.