

AGRICULTURE

Clear skies and fair weather allowed farmers to make good progress harvesting summer vegetables, combining corn, and baling hay. However, two weeks without significant rainfall have caused soil moisture levels to decline across the state. Producers remain concerned over the effect that continued dry weather may have on the growth and development of fall small grain, vegetable and cover crops. Days suitable for field work averaged 6.5. Top soil moisture was rated 25% very short, 70% short, and 5% adequate. Field corn harvest continued, with producers reporting extensive wildlife damage in some fields. Livestock producers reported milk production remained steady due to cooler weather. Sweet corn, tomato, and pepper harvest was winding down in most localities. Vegetable producers reported improved crop condition in some pepper fields due to cooler weather. Producers reported that sweet potato harvest should begin in the next few weeks. Pumpkin harvest continued, with producers reporting uneven ripening in some fields. Dry weather and pollination problems during the summer may cause some pumpkin producers to end harvest earlier than normal. Apple harvest continued, with crop condition rated mostly fair. Producers reported yields for some apple varieties will be short due to damage from the spring frost. Grape harvest was underway in some areas, with crop conditions rated mostly fair to good. Some producers reported lower than expected yields due to the drought. White cranberry harvest was winding down in most areas. Producers expect to begin harvesting red cranberries in the next few weeks.

SOIL MOISTURE TABLE

	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	PREVIOUS YEAR
VERY SHORT	25%	0%	0%
SHORT	70%	83%	36%
ADEQUATE	5%	17%	60%
SURPLUS	0%	0%	4%

RANGE AND PASTURE

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS WEEK	PREVIOUS YEAR
VERY POOR	0%	0%	0%
POOR	86%	56%	16%
FAIR	14%	44%	34%
GOOD	0%	0%	50%
EXCELLENT	0%	0%	0%

*JERSEY FRESH AVAILABILITY FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2002

**Provided by the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture.*