



VEGETABLES

ACREAGE- SPRING QUARTER (APR., MAY, JUN.)

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FLORIDA

WEATHER: **January** began with harvests of squash, beans, tomatoes, and other vegetables in the southern Peninsula. However, harvests were quickly halted in several locations throughout the State during a cold front. Hillsborough County reported some losses in strawberries and tomatoes due to frost damage. Some strawberry growers kept a constant stream of water on the crop to protect them from freezing. Hendry County reported a 10-15 percent loss from wind and freezing temperatures. Temperatures warmed back to normal as the month continued. Cool and dry conditions allowed field work to progress on schedule. In Washington County, foggy mornings and mild temperatures caused disease problems in cole crops. Occasional scattered showers in mid-to-late January eased dry soil, but more rains were needed. Some end of the month yields were negatively impacted from the prior freeze. Growers marketed broccoli, sweet corn, avocado, lettuce, squash, beans, tomatoes, asparagus, peas, strawberries, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, and radishes. Spring planting got underway in early **February**. Mild temperatures and mostly dry conditions allowed harvesting and planting on most days. In the Plant City area, peppers and squash were being planted. Farmers were getting prepared to plant watermelons in Sumter County. Harvesting of the winter crops continued with some decline in the volume and quality due to earlier freeze damage. Mid-to-late February thunderstorms brought high winds and heavy rainfall in some areas, especially in the Panhandle. Early spring field preparations were temporarily delayed, but drought conditions were eased. Producers marketed cabbage, broccoli, peppers, mixed greens, beans, cucumbers, celery, endive, escarole, eggplant, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, tomatoes, potatoes, and radishes. In early **March** cool temperatures resulted in several freeze and frost reports across the State. Except for a spurt of storms in early March, very little rain fell. Cold in Flagler County caused damage to the cabbage and potato crops. Damage reports for potatoes were widespread and ranged from minimal to significant depending on location and stage of growth. In Sumter County, some freeze damage was reported for blueberries, watermelons, and squash. Harvesting of winter crops ended while spring planting continued. Vegetables marketed during March: snap beans, broccoli, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, mixed greens, okra, onions, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, snap beans, strawberries, tomatoes, and zucchini.

This report reflects conditions as of April 1 and represents acreage planted for harvest during the months of April, May, June, and July. Estimated acreage by growing region is no longer available.

SNAP BEANS: Freezing temperatures around mid-January damaged the crop. Most of the beans are grown in Hendry and Miami-Dade counties. In February, crops recovered from the January freeze and growers were only able to supply lighter volumes. Throughout February and the first half of March, snap beans were harvested in Florida City. March brought dry and warmer conditions, which allowed plants to get back on track to a more normal production.

CABBAGE: From January through March harvesting of cabbage was continuous, especially in Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. Planting of the spring crop began in January and progressed on schedule due to mild conditions. In Washington County, foggy mornings and mild temperatures were causing disease problems in mid-January. The cold temperatures in Flagler County in early March caused the cabbage crop, which was about 50 percent harvested, to show minor signs of damage. Cabbage harvesting gained momentum as the St. Patrick's Day holiday drew near. Towards the end of March cabbage season wrapped up in central parts of the State, but continued to be harvested in the southern Peninsula.

CUCUMBERS: Spring planting began in January and remained on schedule as warm, dry conditions were experienced. Harvesting was slow in January and February due to cold temperatures. By mid-March, cucumbers were in good condition in Fort Pierce and continued to be replanted. Planting in Lafayette County began mid-March. In Hillsborough County, acreage expectations were similar to last year. Also, in Hendry County pressure on cucumbers from Downy Mildew continued as it becomes resistant to fungicides normally used to control it. Yield was reported as below normal.

BELL PEPPERS: Mostly favorable weather during January and February allowed planting and harvesting to progress. In mid-February, cool temperatures slowed plant development over the central and southern Peninsula.

TOMATOES: Harvesting was active in the southern and East Coast regions in January. Growers ran overhead sprinklers and covered vegetables to protect them from the near freezing temperatures in early January, with some damage reported. Mostly favorable weather conditions over the central and southern Peninsula during late January boosted crop growth and development. In February, some areas experienced delayed field work due to rain while others received some crop damage from cold weather. In St. Lucie, Hillsborough, Lee, and Hendry counties tomatoes were being planted, with the number of fields planted being reduced due to higher production costs and water use restrictions in place. In Plant City tomatoes were harvested and marketed from February to March. In the southern Peninsula, tomatoes that were hit with the January freeze came to maturity by mid-March with lighter harvests. Overall the quantity marketed was less due to cold weather and fewer acres being planted. Warm March temperatures allowed crops to get back on track.

WATERMELONS: Minor freeze damage was reported, but some early growers were able to reset plants. Harvesting will begin in April and continue into early July if prices hold up. Watermelon prices and hauling truck availability will impact how long growers harvest their crop. By early February, growers in Sumter County in central Florida, were preparing to plant watermelons. Suwannee County began planting their crop a few weeks later in the Big Bend area. Around mid-March, Jefferson County in the Panhandle, reported the start of their planting, while the watermelon crop in Sumter County received some freeze damage.

UNITED STATES

GENERAL: The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the spring quarter is forecast at 203,300 acres, down 1 percent from last year. Acreage declines for snap beans, carrots, cauliflower, head lettuce, bell peppers, and tomatoes more than offset acreage increases for broccoli, cabbage, celery, and sweet corn. Cucumber area remains unchanged. Melon acreage for spring harvest is forecast at 72,450, down 2 percent from last year. Watermelon acreage is down 1 percent from 2007 while cantaloupe acreage declined 4 percent from a year ago. Honeydew melon acreage remains unchanged from 2007. Asparagus area for spring harvest is forecast at 34,100 acres, down 11 percent from last year. Strawberry area for harvest is forecast at 46,500 acres, up 2 percent from a year ago.

SNAP BEANS: Area for spring harvest is forecast at 20,200 acres, down 2 percent from last year. Georgia snap beans are in fair to good condition. Soil moisture has been mostly adequate this spring and temperatures were close to normal.

CABBAGE: Area for spring harvest is forecast at 7,900 acres, up 14 percent from last year. In Texas, dry weather combined with heavy irrigation provided favorable growing conditions for the cabbage crop.

CUCUMBERS: Spring harvested area is forecast at 7,200 acres, unchanged from 2007.

TOMATOES: Area for harvest is forecast at 24,500 acres, down 12 percent from 2007. In California, sporadic rainfall provided adequate water to promote plant growth. There have been no reports of significant pest infestations or diseases.

WATERMELONS: Area intended for harvest is forecast at 38,500 acres, down 1 percent from last year. California's spring melon crop is progressing well.

SELECTED FRESH MARKET VEGETABLES AND MELONS:, AREA HARVESTED BY CROP, STATE, AND TOTAL, SPRING SEASON, 2006-07 AND FORECASTED AREA 2008

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Spring acreage			2008 area for harvest as percent of 2007
		Harvested		For harvest 2008	
		2006	2007		
		Acres		Percent	
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	11,000	11,100	11,300	102
Georgia	Apr-Jun	9,600	8,000	7,300	91
New Jersey	Jun-Aug	1,600	1,600	1,600	100
Total		22,200	20,700	20,200	98
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	1,400	1,800	1,900	106
Georgia	Apr-Jun	3,900	3,600	4,400	122
New Jersey	May-Aug	1,000	1,000	1,000	100
Texas	Apr-Jun	700	500	600	120
Total		7,000	6,900	7,900	115
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Apr-Jul	21,000	20,500	21,700	106
California	Apr-Jun	12,000	12,000	13,000	108
Total		33,000	32,500	34,700	107
CUCUMBERS:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	5,500	5,600	5,800	104
South Carolina	May-Aug	1,100	1,200	1,000	83
Texas	Apr-Jun	600	400	400	100
Total		7,200	7,200	7,200	100
BELL PEPPERS: ^{1/}					
Florida	Apr-Jul	7,500	7,400	7,100	96
Texas ^{2/}		100			
Total		7,600	7,400	7,100	96
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Apr-Jul	17,500	17,200	15,000	87
California	Apr-Jun	8,000	8,000	7,000	88
South Carolina	May-Aug	3,000	2,700	2,500	93
Total		28,500	27,900	24,500	88
WATERMELONS					
Florida	Apr-Jul	25,300	24,800	24,300	98
Texas	Apr-Jun	10,100	10,600	10,600	100
California	May-Aug	3,300	3,400	3,600	106
Total		38,700	38,800	38,500	99
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		89,200	88,400	87,100	99
United States		144,200	141,400	140,100	99

^{1/} Includes fresh market and processing.

^{2/} Estimates discontinued in 2007