



# VEGETABLES

## Acres- Winter Quarter (January, February, March 2010)

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
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### Florida

**General:** This report refers to the vegetable acres that growers expect to harvest during the winter quarter (January, February, and March 2010). Growers were contacted in December 2009. The weather narrative for the fall quarter (October, November, and December 2009) is included. During the fall quarter, growers were harvesting fall vegetables and planting their winter vegetables. This report is as of January 1, 2010 and does not reflect any reduction in acreage due to the freezing low temperatures that many growers endured in early January 2010.

**Weather: October** precipitation throughout the State of Florida was scarce. Planting of vegetables was active within the State and fields were irrigated as needed. During the first half of October, Hillsborough County planted strawberries. Flagler, Orange, and Seminole counties planted cabbage. Tomato, squash, snap bean, and cucumber harvesting remained active. During the third week of October, precipitation increased with showers heavier in the Panhandle than in the central and southern peninsulas. Santa Rosa County received over 5 inches, whereas Miami-Dade and Hillsborough counties received less than 2 inches each. Cool temperatures slightly damaged some vegetables in Nassau and Union counties; however, crops in south Florida were stressed by heat. During the third week of October, rain decreased causing water levels in ponds and canals to drop. Planting of winter crops continued. Flagler County growers planted cabbage and Highlands County growers planted lettuce, tomatoes, and bell peppers. The last week of October, growers in Gadsden County growers reported tomato harvest delays due to wet conditions. Throughout the month, avocados, okra, cucumbers, and tomatoes were marketed. The hot weather in October caused bloom drop and reduced vegetable yields in the southern Peninsula.

Throughout most of **November**, temperatures averaged near normal across the State. Tropical Storm Ida hit the State the second week of November. Windy conditions in the southern Peninsula caused blooms to fall and some crops were scarred. Planting was active during the second week of November. Bradford County growers planted strawberries and greens and Putnam County growers planted cabbage and broccoli. During the last week of November, rainfall was received in the central and southern regions of the State. Miami-Dade, Levy, and Broward counties reported 2 to 4 inches of rain. Frost occurred during this same week in several Big Bend counties. Throughout November, potato fields were prepped in the Hastings area. During mid-November, soils within the southern region were in need of rain. Within the same region, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, herbs, oriental vegetables, peppers, tomatoes, sweet corn, and watermelons were harvested. Vegetable volumes from southern Florida were reduced significantly due to unfavorable weather conditions in previous weeks.

Significant rainfall took place throughout the State in **December**. During the second week, the Big Bend and Panhandle areas received the heaviest rains with most locations reporting 2 to 6 inches. During the same week, a hard frost was reported in the northern part of Dixie County. The third week of December, the precipitation continued in the southern Peninsula. In the evenings, below freezing temperatures were common across the Panhandle. Fall tomato harvest in Manatee County ended. Growers planted tomatoes for late winter and spring harvest. In Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, and Lee counties, recent rains caused quality issues in vegetables. Growers reported splitting and cracking of tomatoes and bruising of bell peppers. The moisture within the month caused an increase in vegetable disease and quality problems which led to higher than normal culls. Vegetables harvested in December were strawberries, broccoli, cabbage, sweet corn, watermelons, radishes, snap beans, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peppers, squash, tomatoes, avocados, and greens. Volume remained light on many items and growers struggled to meet holiday demand. At the end of the month, fields were ready for potato planting and cabbage and cool season vegetables were harvested.

**Snap Beans:** Florida area for harvest is forecast at 11,500 acres, down 4 percent from last year. Warm and dry weather allowed planting to proceed on schedule. In southern Florida, growers irrigated fields due to dry conditions.

**Cabbage:** Florida producers expect to harvest 4,800 acres through March; down 2 percent from last year. Planting for the winter crop began in the central Peninsula in November. Light volumes were harvested by mid-December.

**Sweet Corn:** Florida harvested area is forecast at 8,400 acres, 5 percent below last year. Some fields in southern Florida required irrigation. Light harvesting began by December.

**Bell Peppers:** Winter area for harvest is forecast at 6,700 acres, down 1 percent from last year. High temperatures during the fall season caused bloom drop.

**Strawberries:** Harvested area is forecast at 8,900 acres, 1 percent above last year. Growers in Hillsborough County began planting by October and light harvest began in late November and continued into December.

**Tomatoes:** Winter tomato harvest area is forecast at 9,100 acres, down 2 percent from last year.

## United States

The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 157,300 acres, up 2 percent from last year. Acreage increased for cabbage, carrots, and head lettuce. Acreage declined for snap beans, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, sweet corn, bell peppers, and tomatoes. Area harvested for spinach remains unchanged.

**Broccoli:** California harvested area is forecast at 25,500 acres, down 2 percent from 2009. Quality of the broccoli crop is reported to be in overall good condition. However, some growers reported yellowing, knuckling, and pale green appearance.

**Celery:** The winter celery crop for harvest in California is forecast at 7,100 acres, down 1 percent from last year. The winter celery crop is reported to be in good condition.

**Carrots:** Winter harvested area is forecast at 16,600 acres, up 2 percent from last year. In California, cool weather towards the end of the season reduced yields in the Bakersfield area. In Texas, the carrot crop is progressing well.

**Cauliflower:** California harvested area is forecast at 8,200 acres, down 4 percent from last year. Harvest was ahead of schedule and quality of the cauliflower crop is reported to be good.

**Head Lettuce:** Area for harvest is forecast at 51,000 acres, up 9 percent from last year. Harvest in Arizona began in mid-November. Harvest of California's iceberg lettuce crop began around the third week of November.

**Spinach:** Harvested area of winter spinach in Texas is forecast at 600 acres, unchanged from 2009. Harvest of the Baby leaf spinach is well underway.

**Strawberries:** Planted area for the major States (California, Florida, and Oregon) is forecast at 48,500 acres, down 3 percent from 2009. California's strawberry season started slowly this year due to wet and cool weather.

### Selected Fresh Market Vegetables and Strawberries, Prospective Acreage for Harvest, Winter Season, by States, 2010 with Comparisons

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2010 area for harvest as percent of 2009 (percent)
		Harvested		For harvest 2010 (acres)	
		2008 (acres)	2009 (acres)		
<b>SNAP BEANS</b>					
Florida .....	January - March	13,500	12,000	11,500	96
<b>CABBAGE</b>					
Florida .....	January - March	5,000	4,900	4,800	98
Texas .....	December - March	6,330	6,820	7,800	114
Total .....		11,330	11,720	12,600	108
<b>SWEET CORN</b>					
Florida .....	January - March	9,200	8,800	8,400	95
<b>BELL PEPPERS <sup>1</sup></b>					
Florida .....	January - March	6,400	6,800	6,700	99
<b>TOMATOES</b>					
Florida .....	January - March	9,100	9,300	9,100	98
<b>CARROTS</b> .....					
California .....	January - March	15,600	15,500	16,000	103
Texas .....	December - March	800	700	600	86
Total .....		16,400	16,200	16,600	102
<b>HEAD LETTUCE</b>					
Arizona - Western .....	November - April	32,700	32,000	34,000	106
California .....	January - March	18,000	15,000	17,000	113
Total .....		50,700	47,000	51,000	109
<b>BROCCOLI <sup>1</sup></b>					
California .....	January - March	27,000	26,000	25,500	98
<b>CAULIFLOWER <sup>1</sup></b>					
California .....	January - March	8,000	8,500	8,200	96
<b>CELERY <sup>1</sup></b>					
California .....	January - March	7,300	7,200	7,100	99
<b>SPINACH</b>					
Texas .....	December - March	1,100	600	600	100
<b>TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED</b>					
Florida .....		43,200	41,800	40,500	97
United States .....		160,030	154,120	157,300	102
<b>STRAWBERRIES <sup>1</sup></b>					
Florida .....	December - May	6,900	8,800	8,900	101
California .....		37,600	39,000	37,500	96
Oregon .....		1,800	1,700	1,800	106
Total .....		46,300	49,500	48,200	97

<sup>1</sup> Includes fresh market and processing.