

Hawaii Vegetables

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Weather turns drier

Vegetable crops made mostly fair progress in August as drier conditions prevailed in many parts of the State. Rainfall levels dropped the most on the islands of Kauai and Oahu where many stations recorded less than 30 percent of August's normal amount. Conditions were a little wetter the eastern half of the State with the Big Island getting most of August's rain. In particular, leeward areas of the Big Island received some heavy showers from August 7 through August 9 and again on August 28. The windward side of the island also received some heavy rains on August 6 and 7, but drier weather during the rest of the time kept the overall total rainfall for the month at below normal levels. Irrigation was heavy in most areas to combat the dryness and relatively warm temperatures (a string of 155 consecutive days of above normal temperatures was finally broken on August 29 when Honolulu recorded a daily average temperature of 81^o F).

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Year-ago, month-ago, current, and upcoming harvested acreage.

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Situational report by the Economic Research Service.

Harvested acreage will remain stable or increase for a majority of vegetable crops during September. Increases in harvested acreage will be registered by **snap beans** (+33%), **head cabbage** (+12%), **mustard cabbages** (+11%), and **head lettuce** (+75%). Declines in harvested acreage are anticipated for **sweet corn** (-15%), **dry onions** (-29%), and **green onions** (-10%). Harvested acreage is expected to remain unchanged for **Chinese cabbage**, **cucumbers**, **semi-head (Manoa) lettuce**, and **romaine**. ■



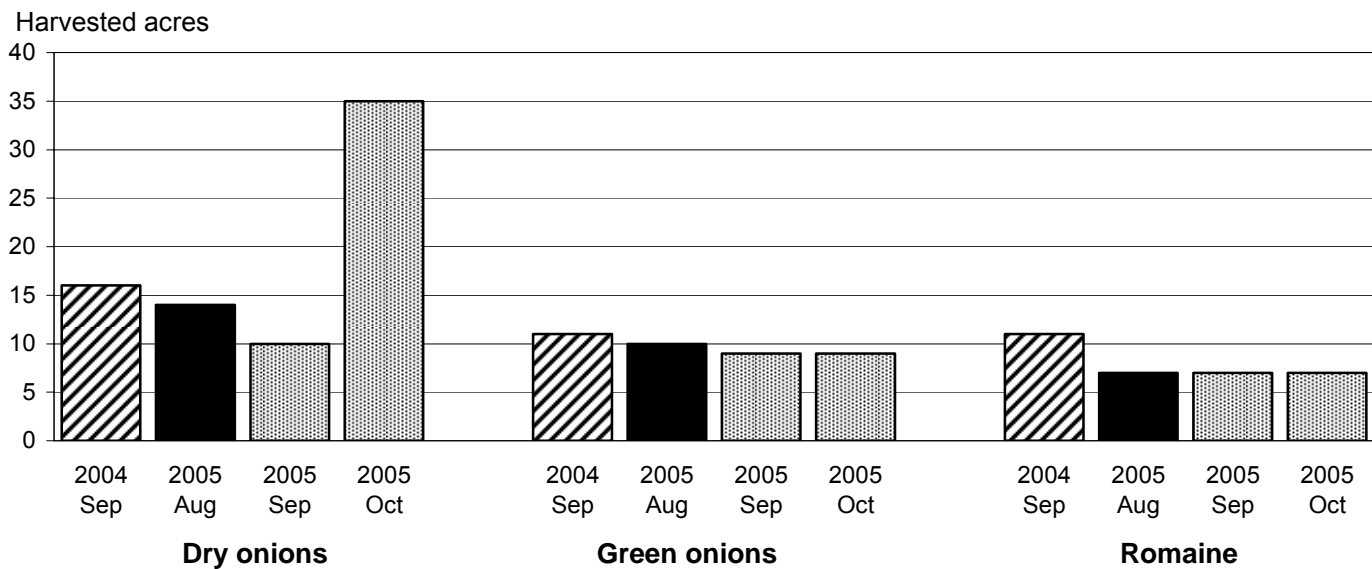
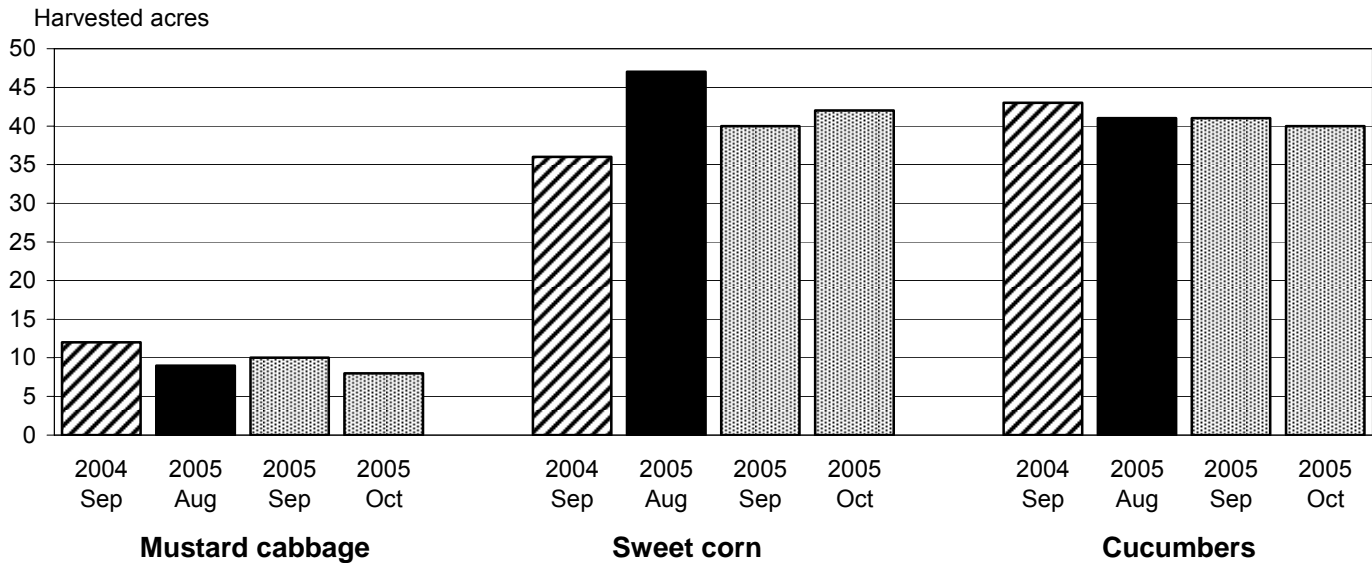
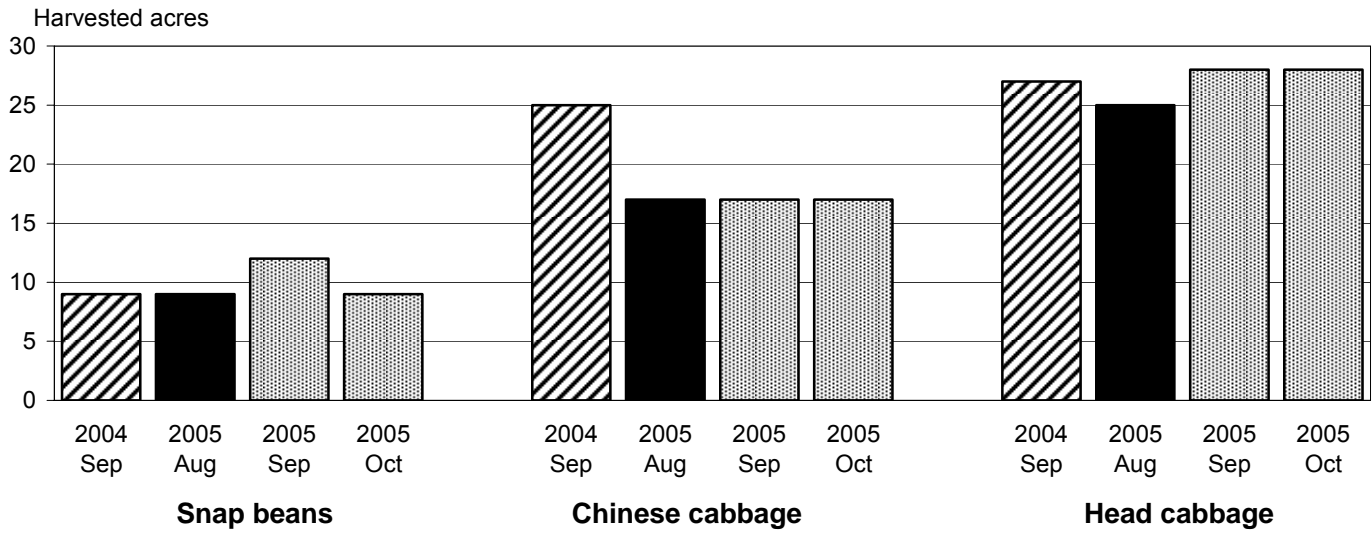
Acreage

Acres planted, harvested, and for harvest for 11 selected vegetables, State of Hawaii.

Crop	Acres planted		Acres harvested		Acres for harvest	
	Jul 2005	Aug 2005	Jul 2005	Aug 2005	Sep 2005	Oct 2005
Beans, snap	11	10	14	9	12	9
Cabbage, Chinese	16	19	17	17	17	7
Cabbage, head	26	26	25	25	28	19
Cabbage, mustard	9	11	7	9	10	8
Corn, sweet	45	36	42	47	40	42
Cucumbers	40	41	40	41	41	40
Lettuce, head	3	7	5	4	7	5
Lettuce, semi-head	5	5	5	5	5	5
Onions, dry	20	33	32	14	10	35
Onions, green	9	9	9	10	9	9
Romaine	7	7	10	7	7	4

Harvested acreage charts

Acres harvested a year ago
 Acres harvested last month
 Acres intended for harvest



U.S. Sweet Potatoes

Fewer Acres in 2005

In 2005, the total sweet potato area for harvest is estimated to be 89,500 acres-4 percent below 2004's production area. This decline is largely due to reduced area in North Carolina-the top producing State. The estimated ratio of harvested to planted acreage-97 percent in 2005-represents the highest proportion since 1984 for the nine major sweet potato States. Average yields over the past 2 years-174 cwt in 2004 and 172 cwt in 2003-were the highest on record. If the yield in 2005 comes in around 170 cwt per acre, production will amount to 15.2 million cwt, which is 6 percent below 2004's level of 16.1 million cwt.

The increased supply of sweet potatoes from the 2004 crop appears to be responsible for lower average prices through June, which were down 12

percent from last year, reflecting relatively weak domestic demand. However, shipping point prices in May and June are higher than last year, at least for sweet potatoes shipped from Louisiana and eastern North Carolina. Also, exports are up in value and volume, indicating stronger foreign demand, in part due to the dollar's lower exchange rate. However, exports comprise only 4 percent of U.S. production, thus limiting their overall effect on prices. Sweet potato growers are aware that a smaller crop is likely to bring higher prices, but only growers in North Carolina and New Jersey cut their planted acreage in 2005.

China Dominates World Production

World production of sweet potatoes was 127 million metric tons (mt) in 2004, excluding yams. Of this amount, China

produced 105 million mt, or 82 percent of the world total. By contrast, the United States produced only 730,830 mt, or 0.6 percent of world production in 2004, lower than Indonesia, Japan, and India. World imports or exports of sweet potatoes are even smaller, either one comprising only 0.07 percent of world production in 2003. An estimated 73.5 million mt of sweet potatoes were consumed as food globally in 2002, or close to 60 percent of world production. In per capita terms, 11.8 kilograms of sweet potatoes were consumed on average in 2002, including Americans. In the United States, per capita consumption of sweet potatoes was only 4.7 pounds, or 2.1 kilograms.■

Source: *Vegetables and Melons Outlook/VGS-310/August 18, 2005*, Economic Research Service, USDA.