

## FALL POTATOES

December 1, 2009 assessments placed fall potato production in Maine at 15.3 million cwt (hundredweight) in 2009, three percent above 2008, but 8 percent below 2007 output. Although planted acreage was unchanged from 2008, Maine farmers harvested more acreage in 2009 than a year earlier. Growers dug potatoes from 55,500 acres, 800 more acres than the previous year. In 2008, an estimated 1,300 acres were abandoned due to losses from wet conditions and disease.

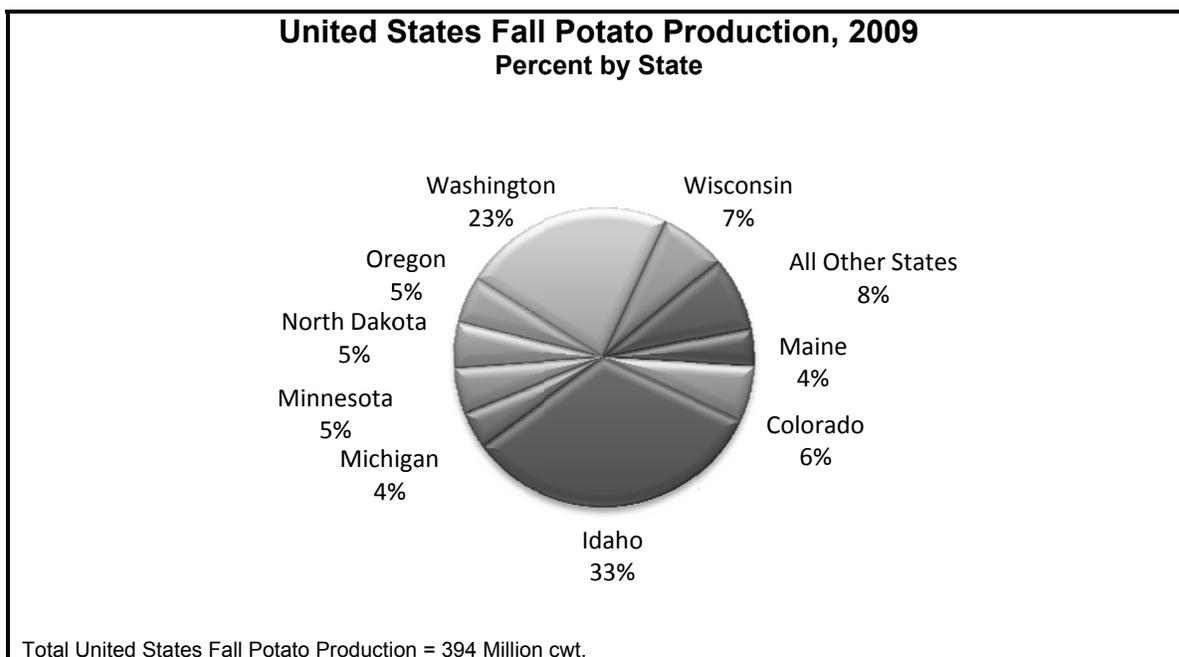
Cool, dry spring conditions got potato planting off to an early start in Maine. Dry conditions continued through May 24th, and the crop was 90 percent seeded by that date, compared with 50 percent last year and normal. Cool, cloudy and wet conditions followed, slowing emergence and bringing crop progress back on par with normal. Temperatures warmed up in July but wet weather continued through early August. Rainfall amounts were extremely variable, with northern areas of Aroostook County not receiving as much rain as further south. The return of sunshine and heat were welcomed in mid-August, but dry conditions continued into mid-September, keeping tubers from bulking up. Dry soils early-on also increased the potential for bruising.

Cool, rainy conditions arrived in early October when the crop was about 35 percent dug, too late to boost yields and slowing harvest. By mid-October, 10 percent of the crop was still left to dig, and temperatures had begun to dip below freezing. The last of the acreage was dug by late October, ending a difficult and challenging season. Yields averaged 275 cwt per acre in 2009, compared with 270 cwt per acre in 2008, and the previous 5-year average of 292 cwt per acre.

Results from the 2009 Potato Objective Yield (POY) Survey confirmed Russet Burbank as the leading variety seeded in Maine, comprising 41.5 percent of the total acres planted. Frito-Lay varieties comprised 11.1 percent of the total acreage, followed by Russet Norkotah at 5.1 percent, and Superiors at 4.9 percent. The POY Survey placed the average number of hills per acre for all potato varieties planted in Maine at 11,810 hills per acre, up 5 percent from 2008. On average, growers harvested 9.1 tubers per hill in 2009, compared with the 8.6 tubers per hill average in 2008. Russets graded out at 72 percent US #1 in 2009, compared with 66 percent in 2008 and 5-year average of 69 percent. Yellow varieties graded out at 82 percent US #1, unchanged from the previous year. Survey results placed fewer potatoes in the US #1 category in 2009 than in earlier years for round whites and reds.

The preliminary price received for 2009 crop Maine potatoes for all uses was estimated at \$9.90/cwt, compared with the 2008 average price of \$9.75/cwt. Final 2009 crop disposition and sales data will be published September 23, 2010.

Potato farmers in Massachusetts also battled wet conditions in July which continued into mid-August. Excessive moisture increased the incidence of blight and growth cracks as well as providing less than optimal early harvest conditions. Dry weather returned in September which improved digging conditions. Wet and cold weather returned to finish the season, and harvest wrapped up in early November. Production weighed in at 884,000 cwt, with 3,400 acres harvested and yields at 260 cwt per acre. Rhode Island potato farmers harvested 400 acres in 2009, and yields were expected to average 210 cwt per acre based on early December assessments.



FALL POTATOES: Acreage, Yield, Production, Disposition, and Value, 2000 – 2009 <sup>1</sup>

State and Year	Area		Yield per Acre	Production	Total Used for Seed	Disposition			Price Per Cwt	Value of	
	Planted	Harvested				On Farm Where Grown		Sold		Production	Sales
						Seed, Feed, Home Use	Shrink and Loss				
	1,000 Acres		Cwt			1,000 Cwt		Dollars	1,000 Dollars		
<b>MAINE</b>											
2000	64.0	64.0	280	17,920	1,313	315	1,490	16,115	6.15	110,208	99,107
2001	62.5	62.0	265	16,430	1,355	301	849	15,280	7.65	125,690	116,892
2002	64.5	64.0	265	16,960	1,386	310	790	15,860	7.05	119,568	111,813
2003	66.0	65.5	260	17,030	1,245	215	2,430	14,385	6.05	103,032	87,065
2004	63.5	61.5	310	19,065	1,231	190	4,900	13,975	6.50	123,923	90,735
2005	57.5	56.2	275	15,455	1,264	242	1,183	14,030	8.25	127,504	115,619
2006	58.5	57.0	305	17,385	1,228	228	1,227	15,930	7.80	135,603	124,027
2007	57.1	56.5	295	16,668	1,183	195	633	15,840	7.90	131,677	125,374
2008	56.0	54.7	270	14,769	1,154	214	525	14,030	9.75	143,998	137,051
2009	56.0	55.5	275	15,263					9.90*	151,104*	
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>											
2000	2.9	2.6	255	663	63	1	75	587	5.40	3,580	3,170
2001	3.0	2.9	265	769	71	5	30	734	6.90	5,306	5,065
2002	3.3	3.2	255	816	65	5	16	795	7.30	5,957	5,804
2003	3.0	2.7	265	716	56	5	16	695	6.00	4,296	4,179
2004	2.6	2.5	320	800	59	5	6	789	6.60	5,280	5,198
2005	2.5	2.4	260	624	76	4	8	612	8.80	5,491	5,388
2006	3.1	3.1	240	744	59	5	5	734	10.10	7,514	7,433
2007	2.7	2.6	320	832	60	-	12	820	7.50	6,240	6,151
2008	2.8	2.7	260	702	74	12	25	665	14.20	9,968	9,413
2009	3.5	3.4	260	884					9.10*	8,044*	
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>											
2000	0.5	0.5	275	138	13	-	-	138	7.20	994	994
2001	0.5	0.5	280	140	10	-	3	137	6.70	938	918
2002	0.5	0.5	235	118	13	-	-	118	7.75	915	915
2003	0.6	0.6	285	171	11	-	12	159	7.00	1,197	1,112
2004	0.5	0.5	290	145	14	-	3	142	7.65	1,109	1,086
2005	0.5	0.5	210	105	12	-	2	103	8.50	893	874
2006	0.5	0.5	260	130	14	-	2	128	10.40	1,352	1,325
2007	0.6	0.6	300	180	12	-	5	175	8.55	1,539	1,495
2008	0.5	0.5	280	140	12	-	3	137	13.30	1,862	1,826
2009	0.5	0.4	210	84					10.80*	907*	
<b>NEW ENGLAND <sup>2</sup></b>											
2000	67.4	67.1	279	18,721	1,389	316	1,565	16,840	6.13	114,782	103,271
2001	66.0	65.4	265	17,339	1,436	306	882	16,151	7.61	131,934	122,875
2002	68.3	67.7	264	17,894	1,464	315	806	16,773	7.07	126,440	118,532
2003	69.6	68.8	260	17,917	1,312	220	2,458	15,239	6.06	108,525	92,356
2004	66.6	64.5	310	20,010	1,304	195	4,909	14,906	6.51	130,312	97,019
2005	60.5	59.1	274	16,184	1,352	246	1,193	14,745	8.27	133,888	121,881
2006	62.1	60.6	301	18,259	1,301	233	1,234	16,792	7.91	144,469	132,785
2007	60.4	59.7	296	17,680	1,255	195	650	16,835	7.89	139,456	133,020
2008	59.3	57.9	270	15,611	1,240	226	553	14,832	9.98	155,828	148,290
2009	60.0	59.3	274	16,231					9.86*	160,055*	

<sup>1</sup> 2009 crop production, disposition, and sales will be published September 23, 2010, in the *Potatoes, 2009 Summary*.<sup>2</sup> New England includes Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.\* 2009 figures are preliminary as published in *Crop Values*, February 19, 2010.

## MAINE POTATOES: Potato Production and Stocks by Month, 2003 – 2008 Crop Years

Crop Year	Production	Stocks Held by Growers, Local Dealers, and Processors						
		Current Year December 1	Following Year					
			January 1	February 1	March 1	April 1	May 1	June 1
1,000 cwt								
2003	17,303	13,500	12,100	10,500	8,900	6,500	4,100	2,300
2004	19,065	15,000	12,800	11,100	9,400	7,500	5,000	2,900
2005	15,455	12,500	11,200	9,700	8,400	6,500	4,300	2,500
2006	17,385	14,000	12,500	10,900	9,600	7,600	5,300	3,000
2007	16,668	12,900	11,400	9,700	8,000	6,400	4,300	2,500
2008	14,769	11,300	10,000	8,500	7,100	5,600	3,700	2,200

MAINE POTATOES: Prices Received by Farmers for Potatoes,  
Monthly and Marketing Year Average, 2003 – 2008 Crop Years<sup>1</sup>

Crop Year	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Market Year Average
Dollars per cwt													
2003	6.00	5.25	5.45	5.85	5.70	5.80	5.70	6.10	6.30	6.75	7.05	7.05	6.05
2004	5.90	5.15	5.65	6.15	6.35	5.90	6.55	6.60	6.95	7.30	7.40	7.70	6.50
2005	*	5.85	6.30	7.85	8.20	8.20	8.40	8.75	9.45	9.30	8.50	8.10	8.25
2006	*	6.25	6.50	8.15	8.25	8.35	7.90	7.60	8.15	8.20	8.05	7.65	7.80
2007	*	6.20	6.40	7.25	7.55	7.60	8.00	8.55	8.65	9.15	8.75	8.55	7.90
2008	*	7.80	8.65	10.20	9.95	9.95	10.40	11.20	10.60	9.70	9.15	8.80	9.75

<sup>1</sup> Average price of potatoes sold for all uses, including table stock, processing, seed and livestock feed.

\* Missing data indicates too few potatoes being marketed to set price.

## MAINE POTATOES: Percent of Acres Planted by Variety and Type, 2004 – 2009

Variety and Type	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Percent						
<b>By Variety:</b>						
Russet Burbank	36.7	42.5	42.5	39.1	42.6	41.5
Frito-Lay, All	11.5	17.1	17.1	18.9	13.8	11.1
Russet Norkotah	3.0	1.6	2.1	2.6	4.2	5.1
Superior	3.0	3.4	4.5	5.0	3.5	4.9
Yukon Gold	3.3	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.3
Shepody	9.3	7.2	5.2	4.6	4.6	3.9
Norland	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.6	4.0	3.6
Atlantic	3.0	3.5	1.5	2.0	1.4	3.0
Goldrush	1.9	2.7	1.0	2.8	3.7	2.7
Katahdin	2.5	2.4	3.1	2.8	2.4	2.7
Monona	1.7	1.0	1.9	1.9	*	2.1
Reba(NY87)	1.7	1.4	2.1	1.5	2.2	2.0
Ontario	5.5	2.8	2.9	2.0	2.6	1.5
Snowden	2.3	2.2	2.1	3.8	*	1.4
Norwis	2.2	2.4	2.3	1.8	3.6	1.2
Chieftain	1.3	*	*	*	*	*
Centennial Russet	1.2	*	*	*	*	*
Mainstay	1.0	*	*	*	*	*
Andover	*	*	1.0	*	*	*
Red La Soda <sup>1</sup>	—	—	—	—	1.0	*
Other Varieties	6.4	4.7	5.3	5.3	6.7	9.0
<b>Total Varieties</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>By Type:</b>						
Russets	43.5	47.0	46.0	45.0	52.0	51.0
Whites (Long and Round)	51.0	49.5	51.0	46.0	35.0	35.0
Yellows <sup>1</sup>	—	—	—	5.0	8.0	8.0
Reds	5.5	3.5	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0
<b>Total Types</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Unavailable prior to 2007.

\* Included with other varieties.

**MAINE POTATOES: Number of Tubers per Hill, Hills per Acre,  
Percent of Net Yield by Grading Categories and Type, 2004 – 2009**<sup>1</sup>

Type and Year	Tubers per Hill <sup>2</sup>	Hills per Acre	United States Grading Categories		
			US Number 1 2 Inch Minimum <sup>3</sup>	US Number 2 or Processing Usable 1 ½ Inch Minimum <sup>4</sup>	Cull <sup>5</sup>
	Number		Percent of Net Yield		
<b>Reds<sup>6</sup></b>					
2004	—	12,598	—	—	—
2005	—	13,005	—	—	—
2006	—	14,532	—	—	—
2007	8.1	12,874	80	17	3
2008	7.2	13,785	87	9	4
2009	7.6	14,873	82	9	9
<b>Yellows<sup>6</sup></b>					
2007	6.6	13,418	82	12	6
2008	9.0	13,228	82	10	8
2009	6.1	15,617	82	10	8
<b>Round Whites</b>					
2004	8.5	13,609	85	8	7
2005	7.3	12,494	83	8	9
2006	8.0	12,604	78	10	12
2007	7.1	13,290	89	9	2
2008	6.7	12,796	76	12	12
2009	7.7	14,061	73	16	11
<b>Long Whites<sup>7</sup></b>					
2004	6.8	13,024	69	11	20
2005	6.7	10,402	81	11	8
2006	6.0	13,149	60	17	23
2007	7.5	11,943	59	24	17
2008	5.0	11,784	64	21	15
2009	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Russets</b>					
2004	10.7	10,012	70	13	17
2005	9.8	9,007	74	16	10
2006	10.9	10,208	63	21	16
2007	11.0	9,629	70	18	12
2008	10.2	9,603	66	20	14
2009	10.7	9,638	72	19	9
<b>All Varieties</b>					
2004	9.3	11,969	—	—	—
2005	8.6	10,595	—	—	—
2006	9.1	11,613	—	—	—
2007	8.9	11,519	—	—	—
2008	8.6	11,210	—	—	—
2009	9.1	11,810	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> Percent of net yield adjusted for field loss.<sup>2</sup> Tubers 1½ inches and over.<sup>3</sup> Potatoes which meet the requirements for US#1, as stated in U.S. Standards for Grades of Potatoes, USDA, Agriculture Marketing Service.<sup>4</sup> Potatoes which meet the requirements for US#2, as stated in U.S. Standards for Grades of Potatoes, USDA, Agriculture Marketing Service.<sup>5</sup> Potatoes not meeting the requirements for US#1 or US#2, as stated in U.S. Standards for Grades of Potatoes, USDA, Agriculture Marketing Service.<sup>6</sup> All years not available.<sup>7</sup> Unavailable after 2008; too few reports to allow publication.

MAINE POTATOES: Percent of Net Yield by Size Categories and Type, 2004 – 2009 <sup>1</sup>

Type and Year	United States Size Group Categories								Number of Samples	
	1 ½ Inch – under 1 ⅞ Inch	1 ⅞ Inch – under 2 Inch	2 Inch – under 2 ¼ Inch	2 ¼ Inch – under 2 ½ Inch	2 ½ Inch – under 3 ½ Inch	3 ½ Inch – under 4 Inch	4 Inches +	Percent		
Reds <sup>2</sup>	Percent								Number	
2007	6	7	16	28	43	*	—		6	
2008	1	2	16	27	54	*	—		8	
2009	3	2	23	25	46	1	*		6	
Yellows <sup>2</sup>	Percent								Number	
2007	1	3	8	13	65	10	*		11	
2008	1	2	10	15	69	2	1		9	
2009	*	2	13	14	70	1	*		9	
Round Whites	Percent								Number	
2004	2	3	10	16	63	6	*		62	
2005	2	3	9	15	61	9	1		58	
2006	*	2	11	18	64	4	1		59	
2007	1	1	10	21	61	5	1		54	
2008	*	4	12	20	60	3	1		43	
2009	4	5	13	20	54	3	1		36	
				2 Inches and over			10 oz and over			
				4 oz – Under 6 oz <sup>3</sup>	6 oz – Under 8 oz	8 oz – Under 10 oz	10 oz – Under 12 oz	12 oz – Under 14 oz	14 oz +	
	Percent									
Long Whites (Shepody) <sup>4</sup>	Percent								Number	
2004	1	2	15	21	18	17	8	18	15	
2005	5	1	27	18	19	13	9	8	8	
2006	1	3	22	19	19	9	12	15	11	
2007	2	1	37	25	20	5	9	1	9	
2008	2	6	19	19	15	17	13	9	7	
2009	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	
Russets	Percent								Number	
2004	3	4	29	21	15	9	6	13	62	
2005	4	4	32	18	15	10	6	11	79	
2006	6	7	35	19	12	8	4	9	64	
2007	7	6	33	20	14	8	5	7	68	
2008	6	7	35	20	12	7	5	8	69	
2009	7	7	41	20	11	5	4	5	61	

<sup>1</sup> Percent of net yield adjusted for field loss.<sup>2</sup> All years not available.<sup>3</sup> Includes potatoes 2 inches or greater weighing less than 4 ounces.<sup>4</sup> Unavailable after 2008; too few reports to allow publication.

\* Less than 0.5 percent.



**MAINE POTATOES: Harvest Loss by Size Categories and Type, 2004 – 2009 <sup>1</sup>**

Type and Year	United States Size Group Categories							Total
	1 ½ Inch – Under 1 ⅞ Inch	1 ⅞ Inch – Under 2 Inch	2 Inch – Under 2 ¼ Inch	2 ¼ Inch – Under 2 ½ Inch	2 ½ Inch – Under 3 ½ Inch	3 ½ Inch – Under 4 Inch	4 Inches +	
Cwt per Acre								
Round Whites								
2004	3	2	3	3	3	1	0	15
2005	1	1	4	3	6	0	0	15
2006	7	3	5	3	4	0	0	22
2007	4	3	2	1	3	0	0	13
2008	6	2	4	3	7	1	0	23
2009	7	2	6	3	5	*	0	23

2 Inches and Over				
4 oz – Under 6 oz <sup>2</sup>	6 oz – Under 8 oz	8 oz – Under 10 oz	10 oz – Under 12 oz	12 oz – Under 14 oz

Cwt per Acre								
Russets								
2004	8	4	9	4	1	4	0	30
2005	3	2	6	2	1	1	0	15
2006	6	3	9	3	*	2	0	23
2007	5	2	2	2	2	*	0	13
2008	10	2	5	1	2	0	0	20
2009	11	3	5	1	1	2	0	23

<sup>1</sup> Includes US#1, US#2, and Culls.

<sup>2</sup> Includes potatoes 2 inches or greater weighing less than 4 ounces.

\* Less than 0.5 cwt/acre.



Photo courtesy of Clover Leaf Farm, Presque Isle, ME