

Vegetables

The mild winter, variable temperatures in spring, persistent dry summer, and favorable fall weather each had varying effects upon the vegetable crops this season. Early spring planting was delayed because of wet conditions. Temperatures were about normal in early spring, but then turned cooler for the second part of spring. The drier and cooler temperatures slowed the harvest of spring vegetables. The prolonged cool temperatures also had adverse impact on the planting of summer crops. Planting of sweet corn was 7-10 days later than usual. Fall planting was lower than usual because of higher fuel costs and sustained low produce prices for this season. Production of asparagus, collards, eggplant, kale, leaf and Romaine lettuce, spinach, winter squash, and sweet corn were higher, while cabbage, cucumbers, escarole & endive, head lettuce, bell peppers, pumpkins, snap beans, summer squash, and tomatoes had lower production. As the season concluded, total value of production of all principal fresh market vegetables and processing vegetables showed a 10 percent and 8 percent decrease, respectively.

There are 17 fresh market vegetables in the USDA-NASS New Jersey Field Office estimating program. Area harvested for these fresh market vegetables in 2005 totaled 32,500 acres, compared with 33,800 acres in 2004, down 1,300 acres. Production amounted to 4.45 million hundredweight, a decrease of 11 percent from the 5.00 million hundredweight produced in 2004. Overall yield in 2005 averaged 137 hundredweight per acre, down 11 hundredweight from the previous year. Season average price was \$26.20 per hundredweight compared with \$25.90 in 2004, up \$0.30 per hundredweight.

Among the fresh market vegetables, collards and cucumbers had higher harvested acres in 2005 than in 2004. Escarole & endive, head lettuce, bell peppers, pumpkins, snap beans, summer squash and sweet corn had lower harvested acres in 2005 than in 2004. Asparagus, cabbage, eggplant, kale, leaf & Romaine lettuce, spinach, winter squash, and tomato acres remained the same. The higher season average price was not enough to offset the decline of production. The value of production showed a decrease of \$13.2 million to a total of \$116 million.

Ranking New Jersey's fresh market vegetables by value of production, tomatoes were first with \$24.9 million, and bell peppers were second with \$20.6 million. Sweet corn, cucumbers, and cabbage were third, fourth, and fifth with \$12.2 million, \$9.70 million, and \$6.94 million, respectively.

Harvested acreage in 2005 of the eight major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, lima beans, snap beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) totaled 8,250 acres, compared with 9,100 acres harvested in 2004. Harvested acres increased for snap beans and cucumbers, while tomato, green pea, lima bean, spinach and sweet corn acres declined. Carrot acres remained the same. Total production, at 61,150 tons, was a 7 percent decrease from the 65,970 tons in 2004. The season average price was \$125.50 per ton, compared with \$126.10 per ton in 2004, down \$0.60 per ton. The 2005 value of production, at \$7.67 million, was down 8 percent from \$8.32 million in 2004.