



VEGETABLES

ACREAGE- WINTER QUARTER (JAN. FEB. MAR.)

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FLORIDA

WEATHER: Rain was plentiful during early **October** in several areas of the State. Many southern counties received 2 inches or more in the first week of October. Despite previous delays from surplus moisture, the planting of vegetables continued throughout Florida. Several counties reported that the crops already in the ground looked good. Okra, tomato, cucumbers, and avocado harvesting remained active. By the second week of October significant showers fell, especially in the northern and central regions. Some fields received over 3 inches. Some producers in Hendry County reported concern of disease due to recent rains. A few growers reported root rot in Hernando County. Growers continued to prepare land and plant vegetables. Cabbage was planted in Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. Precipitation let up mid-month, only to return in late October. Strawberry planting was almost complete in Hillsborough County and picking of grape tomatoes had begun. Land preparations were underway for potatoes in St. Johns County as well. Soils in some southern fields dried out which helped keep disease down. Bradford County planted strawberries and onions. Unusually cool temperatures were seen late in the month causing the season's first frosts and freezes in the northern third of the State. Major cities ranged from 5 to 10 degrees below normal. Producers in Union County lost a significant amount of eggplant and snap beans due to a heavy freeze. Seminole County producers reported little damage from frost. Squash, eggplant, and snap beans were moving through the market by the end of the month.

NOVEMBER: Conditions were dry and cool early in the month. Planting and harvesting continued. Dade County began harvesting snap beans while Gadsden County continued harvesting tomatoes. Immokalee reported a light harvest of squash and cucumbers. Cabbage and broccoli were planted in St. Johns, Putnam, and Flagler counties. Farmers irrigated strawberry plants in Hillsborough County. Other vegetables marketed were sweet corn, eggplant, okra, peppers, greens, radishes, and avocados. Growers reported that fields remained dry despite scattered showers in mid November. The dry conditions allowed harvesting to progress and disease pressure to lessen. Growers in southern areas irrigated tomatoes, greens, and turnips. Some producers in Collier County reported problems with deer. The production of cucumbers, melons, and squash in the central Peninsula slowed due to cold weather. Columbia County reported a hard freeze that killed all tomatoes, green beans, and cucumbers; growers won't replant until spring. Charlotte County producers began preparing land for watermelons. Late in the month, rain aided many north and central fields. Vegetables were reported as looking good, but cool weather and frost slowed growth.

DECEMBER: Fields continued to need water as vegetable harvests increased. Some crops were put behind schedule due to cool temperatures and frost. Some broccoli and cabbage crops were damaged by frost in Columbia County and worms in Duval County. Cabbage was about 70% planted in Flagler County. Harvesting of tomatoes, snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplants, greens, peppers, radishes, squash, endive, escarole, and okra remained active. Avocados were still marketed, but shipments declined seasonally. Light volumes of strawberries began moving through the market. Vegetables were stressed in Union County due to lack of moisture. Strawberries looked good in Bradford County, but harvest was delayed a couple weeks in Hillsborough County due to the unseasonably cold weather. The vegetable crop in Collier and Lee counties lagged behind due to continued cool weather. During the second week of December growers in the Panhandle and southern Peninsula welcomed rains of up to 8 inches. Around mid month traces of rain fell across the State. With warmer temperatures and clear skies, crop growth and harvesting conditions were favorable for the upcoming holiday season demand. Light volumes of cabbage were harvested and the okra market declined seasonally. Soils became drier as the month came to an end with most locations receiving less than a tenth of an inch of precipitation. Temperatures remained warm benefiting vegetables in southern Florida. Growers continued to irrigate crops. Light blight was found in isolated areas among tomato and potato crops. Other vegetables marketed in December included celery, lettuce, and specialty crops.

SNAP BEANS: Florida area for harvest is forecast at 11,600 acres; down 14 percent from last winter's acreage. Freezing temperatures in November caused some growers to lose significant acreage. December's cold weather put some fields behind schedule.

CABBAGE: Florida producers expect to harvest 4,900 acres through March; down 2 percent from last year. Plantings were slightly behind schedule due to excess moisture from Tropical Storm Fay. Unusually cool temperatures in November and December caused light damage.

SWEET CORN: Florida harvested area is forecast at 8,400 acres; 9 percent below last winter. Favorable weather during October, November, and December kept planting on schedule. Light harvest began in mid-November. Cold temperatures in early December hindered some plant growth.

BELL PEPPERS: Winter area for harvest in Florida is forecast at 6,800 acres; up 6 percent from last year. Mostly dry conditions allowed planting to progress on schedule.

STRAWBERRIES: The expected area harvested is forecast at 7,200 acres; up 300 acres from last winter's acreage. Planting took place in October and early November. Growers irrigated plants due to dry conditions. Harvest was delayed for some growers due to cold weather. Strawberries were marketed by early December.

TOMATOES: Florida winter tomato harvested area is forecast at 9,300 acres; up 200 acres or 2 percent from last year's acreage of 9,100. Favorable weather kept planting on schedule.

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 150,900 acres, down 5 percent from last year. Acreage declined for snap beans, broccoli, carrots, celery, sweet corn, and head lettuce. Acreage increased for bell peppers, cabbage, cauliflower, and tomatoes. Area harvested for spinach remains unchanged.

CELERY: The winter celery crop for harvest in California is forecast at 7,200 acres, down 1 percent from last year. Harvest of the celery crop began a week ahead of schedule. However, rainfall and cool weather conditions at the end of the season slowed maturation.

HEAD LETTUCE: Area for harvest is forecast at 45,500 acres, down 10 percent from last year. In Arizona warmer than average temperatures boosted crop growth. However, by mid-December precipitation and unseasonably cold weather delayed harvest. California's iceberg lettuce crop is growing well.

BROCCOLI: California harvested area is forecast at 24,000 acres, down 8 percent from 2008. Cool and dry weather boosted crop growth and development. However, preparatory irrigation was required in many areas due to lack of rain.

SELECTED FRESH MARKET VEGETABLES AND STRAWBERRIES: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and Total, Winter Season, 2007-2008 and Forecasted Area 2009

Selected crops And States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2009 area for harvest as percent of 2008
		Harvested		For harvest 2009	
		2007	2008		
		<i>Acres</i>		<i>Percent</i>	
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	14,800	13,500	11,600	86
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	6,080	5,000	4,900	98
Texas	Dec-Mar	5,300	6,330	7,400	117
Total		11,380	11,330	12,300	109
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	8,600	9,200	8,400	91
BELL PEPPER: ^{1/}					
Florida	Jan-Mar	6,600	6,400	6,800	106
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	10,000	9,100	9,300	102
CARROTS:					
California	Jan-Mar	17,500	15,600	15,400	99
Texas	Oct-Dec	900	800	800	100
Total		18,400	16,400	16,200	99
HEAD LETTUCE:					
Arizona--Western	Nov-Apr	39,900	32,700	29,500	90
California	Jan-Mar	19,000	18,000	16,000	89
Total		58,900	50,700	45,500	90
BROCCOLI: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	28,000	26,000	24,000	92
CAULIFLOWER: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	8,200	8,000	8,500	106
CELERY: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	7,600	7,300	7,200	99
SPINACH:					
Texas	Dec-Mar	800	1,100	1,100	100
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		46,080	43,200	41,000	95
United States		173,280	159,030	150,900	95
STRAWBERRIES: ^{1/}					
Florida	Dec-May	6,600	6,900	7,200	104

^{1/} Includes fresh market and processing.