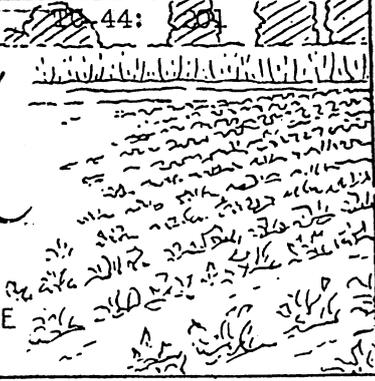


Commercial Truck Crops

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TRUCK CROP NEWS (as of February 1, 1944)

Commercial truck crops in the winter producing areas of Florida and Texas for the most part made satisfactory progress during the second half of January. But in the Lake Okeechobee section of Florida, low temperatures and frosts killed most of the snap beans, did extensive damage to green peas, and retarded the growth of all tender crops. In California and Arizona, cool weather retarded growth to some extent, but showers and light rains in California were beneficial. Conditions in Louisiana, Georgia and South Carolina in the last week of January were more favorable for farming operations than earlier in the month.

Weather in Florida during the second half of January was favorable for hardy crops, but below-normal temperatures retarded the growth of tender crops. Frosts on January 21 and 22 extended into the vegetable growing areas of south Florida. In the Lake Okeechobee section, most of the winter bean plantings were killed, green peas were damaged extensively, but other crops escaped with slight damage. Farming operations are active in all sections of the State as growers prepare for their spring crops. In spite of the losses by frosts and other unfavorable conditions, this season's carlot movement from the State through January is about 8 percent larger than for the same period last year.

In Texas, recovery from the early January freezing temperatures was satisfactory, with losses limited mainly to cabbage, green peas and radishes. A week of favorable growing weather prevailed during the second half of January, and all crops showed remarkable improvement. Onions were particularly benefited. Cabbage is still a little soft but improving, beets and carrots are in fairly good condition, but mature spinach continues to show the effects of blue mold and white rust. Young spinach shows prospects of improved quality. Solid carlot movement for the season continues ahead of this date last year - about 20 percent - with beets, mixed carlot shipments, and spinach accounting for most of the increase. Surface soil in the Lower Valley section is becoming dry as a result of fairly strong winds, but all other areas have ample moisture, with some sections of the Coastal Bend still too wet.

In California, showers and light rains fell in most vegetable growing areas during late January. Planting of spring crops is well along in most areas of the State. Harvest at this time is confined mainly to crops in the desert areas and to a few winter vegetables now available in the coastal districts of the State.

ARTICHOKEs: Growth of California artichokes continues slow, although some improvement has been noted during the past week. At present, it appears as though peak production will not be reached until the latter part of February. Most of the present supplies are moving in mixed cars. Damage from the early January frosts has not been extensive.

ASPARAGUS: In South Carolina, asparagus acreage will be reduced materially. No new beds have been set recently and some old beds have been plowed up. Dry weather in the fall and a lighter fertilizer application may result in relatively low yields.

LIMA BEANS: In Florida, the supply of lima beans from the early plantings of the winter crop continues light. Growing conditions have not been suitable for this crop and the shedding of blooms and small pods has been heavy. Younger plantings appear to be in good condition and the volume should increase during February. Most of the acreage is along the lower East Coast in Broward, Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties.

SNAP BEANS: Frost in the Lake Okeechobee section of Florida on the mornings of January 21 and 22 killed approximately 85 percent of the winter acreage of snap beans which was out of the ground at that time. This is not the main winter bean section, but larger than usual winter plantings were being made this year. Much of this acreage will be replanted but it will be latter part of March before any appreciable movement can be expected from this section.

In the Pampano section, where the main Florida winter acreage is located, the movement is showing an increase as the harvesting moves to plantings which were not damaged by the December frosts. Barring any further setbacks, the movement from this area should reach its peak around the middle of February. In the Homestead area, where the loss was heavy from the December frosts, the progress of the crop has been slow. The warmer weather of the past week has been very beneficial. A light movement is now coming from this section but it will be around the middle of February before the main movement begins.

BEETS: Supplies of Texas beets were plentiful the past two weeks. Shipments were stepped up considerable over previous periods and considerable tonnage was going to canning plants. Crops are in generally good condition in all irrigated districts but progress of the Coastal Bend crop continues slow. Most of the February production from this district will be off grade as a result of the December and January cold spells but late crops show promise of improved quality. Supplies of beets will be available through May.

BROCCOLI: Peak loadings of California broccoli have passed in the coastal districts, but harvest will continue fairly heavy in the San Joaquin Valley, and will increase from the plantings in the Imperial. Supplies during February should remain close to present levels. Movement of broccoli from the Salt River Valley, Arizona has been light during the last half of January but is expected to increase as new fields come into production during February. Growing conditions have been favorable for late plantings, and there are indications that quality will continue to be very good. A large portion of shipments continues in mixed cars.

CABBAGE: Cabbage is in light supply in most areas of California, and in all probability will not be plentiful until March. The crop in the Imperial Valley is just coming into production, and shipments should increase out of this area with a probable peak about mid-February. The Imperial Valley crop is in excellent condition and promises good quality cabbage.

CABBAGE, Cont'd: Arizona supplies have declined recently, but some new fields in the Salt River Valley are now coming into production, and some cabbage at Yuma will also be available for market soon. Heads have not developed to large sizes during January because of low temperatures.

The Texas cabbage crop was damaged by the January freezes with crops in the Coastal Bend affected less than the more important Lower Valley crop. No total acreage loss occurred but matured cabbage that had been light in weight all season was further damaged, with some heads lost. Some young plants were killed and progress of growing crops was retarded. Yield prospects for the area are lowered, but sufficient acreage remains for production to maintain a high level during the next three months. Harvesting activities were stepped up the last week in January and supplies will continue plentiful during February. Peak movement is expected during March when tonnage from the Coastal Bend will supplement active movement in the Lower Valley. There is considerable acreage set out for May harvest but movement during May will depend somewhat on market demand and price levels during the next few weeks. Although considerable tonnage of soft cabbage was marketed in the past two weeks, there is a fairly good volume of sound cabbage, and crops just coming into maturity show promise of a material improvement in quality. The Coastal Bend crop is not expected to furnish supplies of any volume until after the middle of February, with good quality expected from the first cuttings.

Weather in Florida has continued favorable for the growth of cabbage. Yields have been good from that part of the crop which has been harvested. Harvest is becoming general, and an increase in movement should be expected during February. In Georgia cabbage plants are small because of cold weather. Re-planting is still taking place where plants can be obtained. Another hindrance was lack of rainfall at planting time. In Louisiana, unfavorable weather caused some damage to the limited quantity of unharvested winter cabbage. Transplanting of the spring crop, which was interrupted by heavy rains, is now nearing completion under favorable conditions. Earlier set spring plants were slightly damaged and have attained very little growth to date, however, the crop is expected to respond rapidly to present favorable weather and first field cultivations which are now under way. Present indications point to an increase in the spring planted acreage.

CARROTS: Central California carrot plantings are practically all harvested. Most of the remaining fields have undergone rather severe frosts and show discoloration in the tops. Remaining supplies in the coastal areas will be used for most part as topped or clipped-topped carrots. Harvest in the Blythe area is well along and more acreage in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys will be available during February. In the Imperial Valley most of the carrot fields had to be replanted, and consequently, there has been little of the crop available for January harvest. During the months of February, March, and April, however, the Imperial Valley will furnish the bulk of the carrots from California. Carrots are being planted for spring harvest in the coastal districts. There will be some increase in acreage in the old-time carrot sections, and production should be close to that obtained last spring. Harvest at Phoenix Arizona declined late in January, but the movement of carrots from Yuma increased. Some fields in the Salt River Valley are approaching maturity, and it is expected that supplies are sufficient to maintain a moderate movement of solid carrots throughout February.

In all Texas areas, the carrot crop escaped freeze damage and growing conditions during the past two weeks were favorable. Improved quality is expected in the early part of February, and prospects are now favorable for the remainder of the season. Most of the undesirable Winter Garden crops have been harvested, and shipments of straight carrots should show an increase. Lower Valley crops have been of desirable

CARROTS, Cont'd: quality for the past few weeks and crops for current and later season harvest are in good condition. Solid carlot movement is still a little less than normal. But supplies will be available for active movement during February and will continue to be plentiful through May with shipments continuing into June. On February 1, prospective production for the season was about the same as that indicated a month ago.

CAULIFLOWER: In California, cauliflower harvest is finishing on the November-December strains in the coastal areas, and most of the plantings of the January "flower" have been harvested. It will be another ten days before any appreciable volume of February cauliflower becomes available in this area. Shipments are expected to pick up again toward the middle of February, and should become fairly heavy during the month of March. Movement of cauliflower in the Salt River Valley of Arizona may continue at the present rate for another 10 days or 2 weeks, after which it will decline gradually. Many of the early fields have been cleaned up, but later plantings are now in production. Heads have not developed to large sizes because of cold temperatures during January, but recent warm weather is expected to develop larger heads. Quality continues to be good. In Oregon, the production outlook for winter cauliflower, which is concentrated in the Roseburg area of Douglas County, is very favorable, although freezing temperatures on January 27, 28, and 29 may have slightly injured plants which are now heading out. Quality of the early strains now being marketed is good. Out-of-state carlot shipments may develop during the period of peak marketings during the last part of February and the first part of March.

CELERY: The early cuttings in the Sanford section of Florida have turned out rather light yields, but as cutting progresses into the later plantings, this condition should improve. In the Lake Okeechobee section the crop is in good condition and is turning out satisfactorily. The Sarasota crop is making excellent progress. Because of the late start in the Sanford and Sarasota sections, the carlot movement at this time is approximately 25 percent behind last year's movement for the same period. In February, a decided increase in movement over January is expected. Planting in the Sanford section proper is about completed and is slowing down in the Sarasota section. Planting for the spring crop continues in the Lake Okeechobee and Oveido sections.

Present shipments of celery from California are coming mainly from the Salinas district, and from plantings in the Santa Marie-Guadalupe area. There is considerable acreage still available for harvest, and February shipments should hold at about the present levels until the middle of the month. Harvest has started in the Chula Vista section, and increased shipments out of this area are expected to offset any decline which may occur in the districts farther north late in February.

CUCUMBERS: A few cucumbers are being harvested in the Pompano area of Florida but weather has been unfavorable for this crop. This light movement is expected to continue until new plantings made after the December frost come into bearing. Many of the plantings for the early spring trough acreage in Wauchula, Lake and Sumter counties were killed by the cold of January 21 and 22. Replanting of this acreage is about completed. Indications are that there will be a reduction in acreage in those areas which are not especially suited to production of cucumbers. In Texas, considerable land is being prepared for the early spring cucumber crop. Fields are being fertilized now and planting in the earliest sections is expected to start the early part of February, with all areas through by the latter part of the month. A large increase in acreage is practically assured. All areas have excellent moisture conditions.

EGGPLANT: In Florida, fall plantings in the Winter Garden, Manatee and Ft. Myers sections continue to furnish light supplies. The main winter acreage in the Pompano section is slightly larger than last year, but condition of the crop is only fair. Yields have been very light, and a period of warmer weather is needed before much increase in volume can be expected. Plantings are being made in the Ft. Myers section for spring production.

ESCAROLE: In Florida, condition of the escarole crop is good and supplies are available in the Manatee, Sanford and Lake Okeechobee sections. Unfavorable marketing conditions/movement of this crop and some acreage has been abandoned. have slowed the

LETTUCE: Supplies at Phoenix, Arizona are now limited to a small mid-season acreage and shipments from this section are expected to remain light until new fields come into production late in February. Harvest at Yuma is now active, and movement from this district will continue in good volume throughout February. Weather has been favorable for spring plantings and most fields show prospects of heavy production. Harvest in the California Imperial Valley is in its peak, and shipments are expected to continue fairly heavy for another two weeks. Quality of the lettuce is very good, although the early frosts have reduced the sizes to some extent. Planting continues in the spring lettuce districts of the central coastal area, and thinning is well started on a considerable acreage. Fairly cool weather has held back lettuce growth during the past ten days. A rather sizeable acreage will be available for thinning during the next two weeks. Although the acreage has not been surveyed, most informed growers agree that there is a sizeable increase.

In Florida, the Boston lettuce deal in the Sanford and Manatee sections is about over. This crop was damaged considerably by the cold in late December and shipments during January were light. Iceberg is available in the Ruskin-Manatee area, the Lake Okeechobee section and from small plantings in other areas. Quality is reported to be good. Practically all of this crop is used locally or sold in nearby southern markets. Planting of Georgia lettuce is about completed and first plantings are up. In Beaufort County, South Carolina, most lettuce was replanted because heavy rains packed the seed, and some re-setting has been done. Moisture is ample and lettuce should get off to a good start. At Meggett, in Charleston County, plants are very small and are not yet transplanted to fields.

ONIONS: In Texas, good growing weather prevailed during the last two weeks, and crops showed a remarkable improvement, particularly in the Laredo and Winter Garden transplanted areas. In spite of this progress the Laredo crop is about two weeks later than usual but growers fertilized heavily the latter part of January. Much of the delay could be overcome with favorable growing weather the next sixty days. Crops in the Raymondville section continue to make good progress and promise early season harvest. A few fields in the Coastal Bend areas are still too wet but there is a large acreage in good condition with progress about normal. The Wilson-Barnes crop is beginning to grow nicely and there is plenty of moisture for the next thirty days. All areas have been generally free of insects, and plants have a healthy appearance. A heavy movement of plants is going into the North Texas area, but setting to the fields is not making the desired progress because of scarcity of field crews. The plants are being placed in commercial storage houses, with supplies increasing daily.

Plantings of the California Bermuda and intermediate-crop onions made good progress in the desert areas during January. Some onions are still being set to the fields, however. In the onion growing areas, rains have not materially interfered with cultivation, and the crop is generally in good condition.

GREEN PEAS: The green peas crop in the Florida Lake Okeechobee section was extensively damaged by the frosts of January 21 and 22. Most of this damage was confined to pods and blooms. The rate of planting was fairly heavy immediately following the late December frosts, and this acreage should be in production during the latter part of February. In the meantime, supplies will continue rather light. California harvest should gain headway during the first two weeks in February. Frost damage was spotted in the Imperial Valley, with that acreage being harvested for mid-winter production suffering the most damage. Most of the spring peas were retarded somewhat, but damage was confined to the early set of pods. However, with new blooms, a new crop should be available about mid-February when full production should be forth-coming.

In Georgia, planting of green peas has not been completed, but early plantings are breaking the ground. Planting in South Carolina is about finished in the more southern counties and is expected to be over by February 10 around Lake City and Kingstree, the more northerly part of the green pea area. Prospects are for a reduced acreage this year.

GREEN PEPPERS: The fall acreage of Florida peppers in the Ft. Myers, Manatee and Winter Garden sections is still supplying a light movement. The main winter acreage in the Pompano section is in good condition and there should be an increase in volume during February. Seed beds for the spring crop in the central counties are up and should be improved immensely by the warmer weather. Transplanting will be done in mid-February.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: The Texas Lower Valley (Early Spring) potato crop escaped damage from the early January low temperatures. Only a small part of the crop was up and it was not far enough along to be hurt. Planting was completed by the middle of January and conditions in the latter part of January were favorable for all crops to get a start. Although temperatures in this area were normal for the month, in the last ten days they were considerably above average. Surface moisture is becoming scarce but all crops are subject to irrigation. Prospects for early spring harvest are about average. Reports from the Panhandle (Summer crop) section indicate a moderate reduction in acreage is intended. The soil is in good condition and first plantings are expected to start at about the usual time. Harvest of the Winter crop is well under way. Several solid carlots have been shipped, but most of this crop moves in mixed car loadings. Supplies will be available through February.

In Florida, the Lake Okeechobee section is nearing the close of its winter potato deal. Digging will continue into February but the volume will be small. Digging commenced at Ft. Myers the week of January 16. Yields will be slightly reduced from earlier expectations by heavy infestation of blight which hit the crop before it reached full maturity. The prospects for the Dade county crop have been greatly reduced by severe infestations of blight. Indications are that the production will be cut more than 50 percent below earlier estimates. Weather conditions have been favorable for the development of the disease and control measures have been ineffective. Yields from the older fields will in most instances be better than from the younger fields. Some acreage will no doubt be abandoned. In the Hastings and LaCrosse sections planting is under way. Conditions have been good for the planting.

Planting is under full headway in Kern County, California, and will likely continue active in this area for another two weeks. In most of the early potato districts a rather sizeable expansion in acreage is now indicated. Seed is being received in the southern districts of the State, and planting there will start this month.

SHALLOTS: In Louisiana, winter shallots are now moving in volume, with peak shipment expected the first week in February. Excessive rains which prohibited proper field cultivations reduced yields and lowered quality. Plantings of spring shallots has been delayed and much of the crop is later than usual. Although conditions are now favorable for rapid plant development, the general opinion is that because late planing only light yields can be expected. First shipments from the spring crop should begin around February 20.

SPINACH: Shipments in Texas showed a considerable gain the past two weeks and supplies will be available for active movement to continue through most of April. No losses resulted from the January freezes but crop progress was retarded in some areas. There had been considerable acreage of old spinach in the Coastal Bend that promised production but many fields will not be harvested. There is enough acreage of young spinach in this area to assure supplies for the next two months if favorable growing weather develops. Harvest of the Lower Valley crop continues active and supplies will be available through March. Crops in the important Winter Garden and Eagle Pass districts are improving, and supplies will be plentiful through April.

In Arkansas, December freezes killed some spinach, with estimates of the extent of the damage ranging from 20 to 40 percent of the acreage. Most of the remaining acreage was protected during the January freezes by from three to six inches of snow, and consequently damage was slight. Moisture is now plentiful and temperatures since mid-January have been generally mild. Fall-planted acreage is making satisfactory progress. With continued favorable weather, harvesting of this acreage will start about the middle of February and the bulk of the crop should be ready by March 1. Spring plantings have started. The bulk of the spring-planted acreage will be seeded during the next two weeks if favorable planting conditions continue.

STRAWBERRIES: In Florida, the strawberry crop around Plant City escaped the frosts of January 21 and 22 with only minor damage to blooms. Supplies are increasing and the deal should be in full production by the first week in February. In Louisiana, strawberry plants generally are in good condition, although the crop was set somewhat later than usual. Plants remained practically dormant until about a week ago - decidedly in favor of the crop. Scraping and mulching are now progressing rapidly under favorable conditions and with a good root system already established plant growth is expected to respond nicely from now on. Carlot shipments are expected to begin the latter part of March from considerably less acreage than a year ago.

The prospective strawberry crop in Arkansas is quite spotted. Drought last summer caused heavy damage to both old and new plantings rather generally over the State. However, there are a few beds in all the major strawberry producing areas that appear promising at the present time. Generally, beds in the northwest are in better condition than in other parts of the State. Weather has been favorable since mid-September and some beds that appeared dead in the early fall have revived. Adequate moisture is available and considering the thinness of beds, a fair crop should be produced. However, because of reduced acreage and thin stands, the total production will be much reduced from last year. If growers can obtain plants, a considerable volume of new plantings will be made this spring.

SQUASH: Supplies of Florida squash are still very light but the volume of this crop should increase by the middle of February. Most of this winter acreage is located along the lower East Coast from Ft. Pierce to Homestead with light plantings in the other winter sections.

TOMATOES: In California, Imperial Valley plantings are recovering from the frost damage which occurred early in January. Heavier production will be realized early in February. Little damage occurred to the younger plantings which were protected with brush and paper covers. Plantings of the Texas Lower Valley (Early Spring) tomato crop was almost completed when the January 8-15 low temperatures occurred. A few fields were planted as early as the middle of November and a large acreage the early part of December. Plants were in all stages of growth but damage was remarkably light. Only scattered fields were at a total loss and they were replanted immediately. Losses of advanced plants were limited in most cases to normal thinning of stands. Seedlings just out of the ground were the least damaged and only in very few instances had to be replaced. A large acreage is in prospect and practically assured if no further weather damage occurs. With good growing weather an early April harvest can be expected from considerable acreage.

A few shipments of Florida tomatoes are still being made from the fall acreage in the Ft. Pierce and Manatee sections, but these deals are practically over. In the Ft. Myers section the fall plantings were late and have lasted unusually well. A few new fields are coming into production, which will insure a light supply from this section for the winter period. Harvesting of the fall acreage in Broward and Dade counties is about complete. The main winter crop in these counties has begun to move. Volume will be light during February as most of the plantings are late and will come into production in late February and March. Weather conditions will determine to a large extent the length of the harvesting season. In Collier county, another area of winter production, transplanting was done mostly during January. This acreage is below average. Most of the seeding for the spring crop in the Indian River section was done in early January. Plant beds in the Manatee section are generally in good condition, although a few unprotected ones were damaged by the recent frost. Transplanting will commence early in February for the spring crop.

WATERMELONS: Growers in all Texas watermelons areas plan a large increase in acreage. Practically all early areas have excellent moisture conditions and land is prepared with fertilizer now being applied. Earlier-than-usual planting will take place in a number of the early districts. A small acreage is planted and up to a stand, with intentions to carry it as open acreage. With no adverse weather this acreage will furnish production for mid-May harvest. Most early districts will have a large acreage planted by the latter part of February, which indicates heavy production the early part of June. Moisture conditions in the mid-season and late areas are also favorable and the outlook points to early planting.