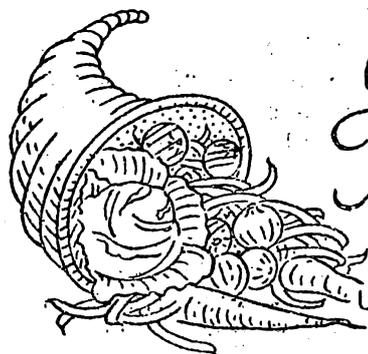


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Commercial Truck Crops



BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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COMMERCIAL TRUCK CROPS FOR FRESH MARKET TRUCK CROP NEWS -- JANUARY 1, 1952

In the winter vegetable producing areas commercial truck crop conditions were generally favorable as December drew to a close, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. In Florida growing conditions as a whole were good. However, average temperatures were above normal, moisture was deficient in some areas, and cold strong winds on December 27 caused some damage. Losses and damage from low temperatures in Texas, Arizona and California were not extensive and higher temperatures during the last week of December were beneficial to development of crops.

In Florida, harvest of fall crops is nearing completion, and winter crops are coming into production. Spring crops are being planted in South Florida and ground is being prepared for them in northern and central areas. Soil moisture was satisfactory in north and central Florida but in South Florida there was a deficiency which was being relieved by irrigation wherever possible. Above normal temperatures have promoted rapid growth of some crops but hardy vegetables would be improved by cooler weather. The high winds on December 27 caused some windburn and a slight reduction in the yields of some tender crops. While shipments declined during the last half of December as harvest of fall crops was completed, they will increase from now on as winter production becomes available in increasing quantities.

Conditions were generally favorable in Texas. Losses from the low temperatures of mid-December were not extensive and progress of vegetables was only slightly delayed. Growth of all crops was stimulated by high temperatures during the last week in December, particularly in irrigated sections. Non-irrigated crops made satisfactory progress except for some leafy crops which needed surface moisture. Good progress was made in planting spring tomatoes and potatoes in the Lower Valley and watermelons in the Falfurrias section. Supplies of hardy-type vegetables are expected to be available in good volume by mid-January.

In Arizona, damage from heavy frosts on December 20 and 21 was not severe. Temperatures again dropped to the freezing level on January 1 and 2 but losses are expected to be light. In California, weather was cool during most of the December 16-31 period and growth of vegetable crops was retarded. This restricted the volume of vegetables moving from the State. Warm rains and higher temperatures near the end of the month improved conditions in most areas. As a result, production of most winter crops should show some increase in January. Planting for spring harvest has begun in a small way in most vegetable areas of that State and during January the preparation of ground and seeding will become general.

ARTICHOKES: Winter (Calif.) Artichokes are in fairly plentiful supply for this season of the year although production declined during December due to cooler weather. Buds in most fields show varying degrees of frost injury and frost-free artichokes are quite scarce. Production is expected to decline further during January.

LIMA BEANS: Winter (Fla.) The winter acreage in the Pompano-Delray section continues to make good progress except for the small portion of early plantings which are still showing the effects of the mid-October rains. Shipments during December were very light but should increase during January as the main acreage comes into production.

SNAP BEANS: Winter (Fla.) Except for strong winds on December 27, growing conditions in South Florida areas have been favorable. Acreage for harvest during January and February in the Everglades section is much lighter than usual, but is in fair to good condition. In the Pompano section, growers resumed their normal planting pattern after the heavy plantings in mid-October for December harvest and unless weather and market conditions intervene, the flow of beans from this area should follow a fairly stable level. There is some irregularity in fields, but the majority of the acreage is in fair to good condition. Recent high winds will cause some scarring and possibly some reduction in yields on the acreage which was blooming and is in the pin bean stage at this time. Total plantings in the area are expected to be about the same as last year with some planting continuing as late as the middle of February. In Dade County, harvesting of snap beans prior to the first of January was very light, but should become active in early January. Indications at this time are that the acreage in this section will be slightly reduced from last year's plantings. The pole bean acreage in Dade County is expected to show an increase over last year's plantings. Harvesting should increase during January. The recent high winds caused some scarring of young beans and possibly a slight reduction in the potential yield.

BEETS: Winter (Texas) Supplies are available in the Lower Valley, Laredo, and Winter Garden sections and some of the earliest fields in the Coastal Bend are expected to be ready the early part of January. Some crops in the Winter Garden section were being harvested for packaging which required small uniform sizes. An expansion of this practice might lower yields considerably. Crops in the Lower Valley that were planted a little late made good growth during the past two weeks and considerable acreage is expected to be ready for January and February harvest.

BROCCOLI: Fall and Winter (Calif.) Supplies in Central Coast producing districts are declining as growers complete harvest on fall fields. Production will decline further during January and will not increase again until the spring crop reaches maturity early in February. Recent rains in Central California have improved quality. Cutting began in Imperial Valley late in December and production there should increase during the next two weeks, reaching a peak in late January. An increased acreage was planted in Imperial Valley this year and supplies from that district will probably be heavier than normal.

CABBAGE: Late Fall, 1951 Season (4 States) In South Carolina, heaviest movement of fall cabbage is over and only light supplies remain available. The season is expected to be over around mid-January.

CABBAGE: Winter (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) In California, harvesting of Imperial Valley cabbage began late in December and an increasing volume is moving from there at the present time. Supplies will increase during the next two weeks as more acreage becomes available for cutting but shipments will be governed by temperature levels. Production has begun in San Diego County and at Oxnard so winter supplies are expected to increase during the next two weeks. If an active shipping deal develops for California cabbage during January and February, supplies for local markets may be reduced and the shortage of last year may be repeated. Indications are that plantings for March and April harvest in Southern California have been reduced this year. A good quality crop is in prospect in Texas and good yields are expected. Most sections of the Lower Valley had some acreage ready for harvest the latter part of December and volume production is expected by the middle of January. Later plantings in this area are in very good condition and, with continued favorable growing weather, production in volume is expected to be available from mid-January through mid-March. The Coastal Bend non-irrigated crop has made very good growth but some of the later plantings are beginning to need surface moisture. A light harvest in that area is expected the early part of January, and considerable acreage is expected to be ready soon after the middle of the month. Marketings to date have been of small but very good quality heads. The continued warm weather in Florida has forced growth and cabbage is generally in fair to good condition. Approximately 85 percent of the prospective acreage had been either set or thinned to a stand by January 1. Shipments during December were light but increased during the latter part of the month. Harvesting will show a gradual increase during January, becoming general during the second half of January, with peak expected during February and March.

Early Spring: (5 States) Since cabbage seed beds in South Carolina were damaged by cold and diseases, making it necessary for growers to buy plants from neighboring states, the acreage which will be planted remains uncertain. However, recent weather conditions have been ideal for planting the spring crop.

CARROTS: Fall, 1951 Season (10 States) Only a limited acreage remains to be harvested in California. The Salinas and Santa Maria districts are pretty well cleaned up and it is likely that remaining fields will be harvested for sacking rather than as bunched carrots. The acreage at Huron is still producing and light shipments are expected to continue until February. Harvest has been completed in the Oxnard district.

Winter: (Calif., Ariz., Tex., La.) In Imperial Valley California, a few cars are being loaded daily and although some increase in production is expected during the first half of January, shipments will not be heavy. In Arizona, heavy frosts in December nipped some carrot tops but damage was not severe. The low temperatures of January 1st and 2nd may have caused more severe damage and may necessitate some topping, but it is too early to determine the extent of damage at this time. Crops in all sections of Texas made good growth and supplies are now available in good volume in both the Lower Valley and Winter Garden sections. Solid carlot loadings have also started in the Laredo section which is earlier than usual. Shipments to date have been of bunched carrots but some topped carrots in the Winter Garden are expected to be moving during the early part of January. All areas are expected to have production in fairly good volume for the next three months. Prospects in the Lower Valley now point to some production extending into April, whereas earlier plans indicated harvest would be completed in March.

CAULIFLOWER: Winter (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) Stimulated by higher temperatures and warm rains in late December, Central California production increased and carlot shipments picked up substantially. Production during the next two weeks is expected to hold at near present levels, since the acreage planted for January harvest is limited. Volume is not expected to be large until February. Freezers are still taking sizeable deliveries from the Snowball plantings in the Los Angeles area. In Texas, exceptionally good quality cauliflower has been available in the Winter Garden and Eagle Pass sections. Loading of trucks has been active the past two weeks and carlot shipments were started the latter part of the month. Supplies are expected to continue in fair volume from these sections during January and February. The Lower Valley with a lighter acreage than usual will have a light cutting starting around the middle of January. Condition of the Florida crop is fair to good. Plantings have made good growth, but cooler weather would be beneficial. Harvesting became fairly active during the second half of December and should show a gradual increase during the next few weeks as more acreage comes into production. Present supplies are coming from the Manatee-Ruskin and Sanford-Winter Garden sections.

CELERY: Late Fall, 1951 Season (Calif., N.J.) California fall production declined rapidly during the past two weeks as shippers in all districts finished their season's operations. Several cars are still moving from the Stockton, Salinas and Santa Maria-Oceano areas but these districts should clean up during the next two weeks. Some stripping is required in most districts to remove frost damaged outer leaves.

Winter: (Fla., Calif., Ariz.) Recent weather conditions in Florida have been too warm for the best development of celery. Plantings have made rapid growth but are not as stocky as they should be. Most of the Zellwood crop has been harvested, but a light production will continue to come from this section during the winter months. Harvesting got under way at Sarasota during the last week of December. In the Sanford-Oviedo section, a small acreage was harvested during December. Very light harvesting is in progress at this time, but it will be the week of January 7 before cutting becomes general. In the Everglades, cutting was fairly active during December and general harvesting will get under way in early January. Winter producing districts in Southern California increased their output considerably late in December and heavy shipments are expected to continue during the next two weeks. The bulk of the current production is originating from the Chula Vista district but carlot supplies are also coming from Oceanside, Orange County and Ventura County. Harvest began late in December on the winter celery planted in the San Joaquin Valley and this district should produce an increasing volume during the next two weeks. Southern California districts have escaped frost damage. Although frosts have touched in the southern San Joaquin Valley, the crop there does not appear to have suffered any significant damage.

SWEET CORN: Winter (Fla.) The early acreage in the Everglades has been harvested, but this section will continue to be a source of light supplies throughout the winter months as occasional acreages come into production. Continuous plantings have been made since the first fall plantings got under way. Plantings for January and early February harvest in this section are relatively light, but a considerable acreage was planted during the second half of December and growers are expected to continue this increased rate of planting with the heaviest plantings occurring in late January and February. In the Fort Myers section, light harvesting is in progress with some acreage still being planted. Indications are that the acreage in this section will be about double that planted last year. In Dade County planting is nearing completion except for a small late acreage and a slight increase in acreage is indicated for this section. A light harvesting has begun. In the Pompano-Boynton section, the crop generally is in good condition.

SWEET CORN: Winter (Cont'd.) Earliest harvest is expected to start the first week in January and plantings are expected to be about finished by the 10th of January. The acreage in this section planted to corn alone is more than double that grown last year and there is considerable additional acreage interplanted with beans. At Indiantown, several hundred acres have been planted, the crop is in fair to good condition, and harvesting should start in late February.

CUCUMBERS: Winter (Fla.) Condition of the winter crop ranges from poor to good. Most of the acreage growing at this time shows prospects for a fair yield. The Immokalee-Fort Myers area will be the principal source of supplies during the winter months. In the Pompano section, harvesting is in progress with production expected throughout January and possibly into early February. In the Fort Pierce-Indiantown area, light harvesting is in progress and production is expected to be available throughout the winter period. In Dade County an acreage slightly less than that planted last year is in fair condition with light harvesting indicated during the winter months.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex.) Planting for spring harvest will get under way in early January in the South Florida sections. Planting of the covered acreage in the Wauchula and Webster sections of Central Florida is now in progress.

EGGPLANT: Winter (Fla.) Crops in the important Fort Myers and Pompano sections of South Florida continue to make fair to good progress. Crops have generally responded to the above normal temperatures and a good volume is expected throughout the winter period. The small plantings in the Everglades are making fair to good progress and, production from this acreage should be earlier than in recent years. The small fall acreage in the Wauchula and Manatee sections continues to provide a very light volume.

ESCAROLE: Winter (Fla.) The escarole and chicory crops are in fair to good condition. The weather has been a little too warm for the best development of these crops and yields on the early plantings have been rather light. Most of the early acreage at Sanford has been cut, but light supplies will continue to be available during the winter months. Seeding and transplanting will continue at Zellwood and with favorable weather, this section will be a source of supplies throughout the winter period. The important Everglades area will be the principal source of supply during the winter months. The acreage in this section is expected to be about the same as that planted last year. Early yields have been slightly below normal due to the necessity for close trimming and a fairly good market has caused growers to harvest before crops reached maximum development.

LETTUCE: Winter (Ariz., Calif., Fla., Tex.) Shipments from the Salt River Valley of Arizona have dropped off sharply as the winter deal is about closed out. Yuma will continue to ship throughout the winter and spring months. The somewhat higher temperatures of late December resulted in an increase in lettuce shipments from California's desert areas, principally Imperial Valley. The two long holidays, however, curtailed shipping somewhat. An increase in production is expected for Imperial Valley during the next two weeks but the extent of this increase will be governed by prevailing temperatures. A week or so of warmer weather could result in a tremendous increase in the amount of lettuce available for harvest. Quality is generally good but, due to prevailing market conditions and the scarcity of lettuce, some off quality is being packed. The warm weather which prevailed up to January 1 in Florida was not favorable for the best development of the crop. At Sanford, most of the early Boston crop has been harvested, but light supplies of all types will continue for several weeks. Harvesting and planting continue at Zellwood and with favorable weather, this section will provide a light

LETTUCE: Winter (Cont'd.) volume throughout the winter period. At Webster, the increased planting of Iceberg lettuce is in fair to good condition with peak movement expected around the middle of January. In the Manatee-Ruskin section, crops are only fair, but active harvesting is under way. In the Everglades, growers have had some difficulty with early plantings, but later plantings are making good progress. Harvesting is well under way and with favorable weather, a good volume should continue to be available from the Everglades throughout the winter months. In Texas, a small acreage of young lettuce in the Winter Garden section was hurt by the mid-December cold spell but advanced crops in this area and in the Lower Valley escaped damage and have been furnishing exceptionally good quality lettuce. Yields from cuttings to date also have been considerably higher than usual for both areas. The Lower Valley expects a fairly active harvest to continue throughout January and February. The Winter Garden usually plants for an early and late harvest. Harvest of the early plantings is expected to be completed by the latter part of January, and harvest of the late crop to start around mid-March.

ONIONS: Early Spring (Texas) Crops in all sections have made very good progress despite the near-freezing temperatures around the middle of December and again a week later. Temperatures during the last week in December--in some sections in the high 80's--were favorable for more rapid than usual top growth. Some of the earliest plantings in the Coastal Bend and Raymondville districts were large enough to be used as green onions. Conditions in all sections were favorable for field work and most fields have been kept clean of weeds. Also, good progress was made in transplanting of the Laredo and Winter Garden crops. Some acreage still remained to be planted in the Winter Garden, while planting of the Eagle Pass acreage was just getting started. Present plans, are for a considerable acreage of the advanced crops to be used for green onions, and this acreage will not be included in the quantity estimated for dry onions.

Late Spring: (5 States) There is considerable uncertainty in growers' plans for a late spring onion acreage in Texas. Shipper-grower interests which comprised only a small part of the large acreage last year do not plan much change from last year, but individual grower plantings are very indefinite. Very little contracting for plants had been done by the latter part of December. Transplanting of onions in the late spring area can continue until the latter part of February without any serious delay in marketing of the crop. A few growers usually start planting around the middle of January but with present prospects for late crops in south Texas most of the north Texas crop will be planted later than usual. Unfavorable developments in south Texas could change growers' present plans in north Texas.

GREEN PEAS: Winter (Fla., Tex., Calif.) A few cars have been moved from Imperial Valley, California, during the past few days and a light movement should continue during the next two weeks barring frosts. Plantings of mid-winter peas in Imperial were very limited again this year. A few peas for local market consumption are available from sheltered plantings made along the Coast of Southern California but these will not develop any significant volume.

GREEN PEPPERS: Winter (Fla.) The continued warm weather has been favorable for the recovery of that acreage which survived the October rains and caused rapid growth of the main acreage which was seeded after the rain. Condition of the crop is mostly fair to good. Production is expected to increase rather sharply in late January and early February with the probability that the peak movement will occur in March. In the important Pompano section, indications are for a slightly increased acreage and this section will be the principal source of supplies throughout the winter period. The crops at Fort Myers are rather irregular and have

GREEN PEPPERS: Winter (Cont'd.) not fully recovered from the October rains, with only fair yields indicated. In the Everglades-Indiantown area, crops are making fair to good progress and if the warm weather continues, the production from this area will be earlier than usual. Light harvesting is now in progress and the early acreage should be in fair volume by late January and early February. A very light production is coming from the winter acreage in the Wauchula-Manatee area.

Spring: (Fla.) Warm weather has caused seed beds to make good growth in the important Plant City section and more than the usual transplanting was made prior to January 1.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: Winter (Tex., Fla.) Growers expected to begin harvesting the Texas Lower Valley crop the early part of January. Supplies are expected to continue throughout January and most of February, with practically all of the crop being shipped in mixed cars or by truck. Conditions have been favorable for this crop. Continued warm weather in Florida has generally been favorable for the winter potato acreage. Although weather has been conducive to the development of blight, growers apparently have kept this situation well in hand and there have been no serious outbreaks of this disease. Light harvesting started on the small acreage in the Everglades just prior to the Christmas Holidays. Digging is now active and most of the crop in this area will be moved during the first two weeks of January. At Fort Myers, killing of vines started the last week of December and some digging is expected to get under way the week of January 7. However, the bulk of this crop is expected to be moved between mid-January and mid-February. The crop in Dade County is growing nicely but rainfall has been deficient and this may have an adverse effect on yields. The earliest digging in this area is expected to start about the first of February.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex.) In the Texas Lower Valley, planting was active the second half of December and most of the small acreage planned for this season should be planted by the early part of January.

SPINACH: Winter (Tex., La., Calif., Miss.) Progress of the Texas crop has varied in the different sections. Most of the crops in the non-irrigated Coastal Bend were in need of surface moisture following the low temperatures around mid-December, which lowered yields of all cuttings during the second half of the month. Mould has affected crops in this area, and lowered quality. Mould also has affected some crops in the Raymondville section. Harvest in that area has been retarded, but is expected to be fairly active by mid-January. Moisture in that area is favorable and some plantings are under irrigation. Supplies from the Eagle Pass section have been light because of unfavorable growing weather and development of mould on a considerable acreage. Movement from the Winter Garden section has been more active than from other areas because of the effective dusting for mould and white rust. Plantings have produced good quality and yields.

SQUASH: Winter (Fla.) The winter crop in the South Florida areas is generally making fair to good progress. The brief cold period of mid-December and the strong winds of December 27 caused minor damage along the lower East Coast. Plantings in the Pompano and Homestead areas have been fairly heavy and indications at this time are for a continued good volume during the winter period if weather conditions are favorable. The Pompano and Dade County sections will be the principal sources of supply supplemented by a light volume from the Fort Myers-Immokalee and Indiantown sections.

STRAWBERRIES: Winter (Fla.) The crop in the Plant City, Wauchula, Webster, and Starke-Lawtey sections is in fair to good condition. Continued warm weather has permitted the crop to overcome some of its earlier delay. Plants generally are blooming heavily at this time. Shipments increased materially during the last few days of December and harvesting should become general in the Central Florida areas by early January and reach peak levels by the latter part of the month.

TOMATOES: Winter (Fla.) The important winter acreage in Dade County was approximately 85 percent transplanted by January 1. In that area present indications show a slight increase in acreage over that planted last winter. The continued warm weather has caused rapid growth. There have been some minor outbreaks of blights, but growers have generally kept this disease under control. Picking has been in progress on the "pineland" crop since early December. Except on irrigated crops, yields on this acreage will be very light due to the very dry growing season. Harvesting on the "glades", which is the main acreage, started during the latter part of December and a good volume is expected to develop during the second half of January. If the warm weather continues, harvesting will reach heavy proportions in early February. The crop in the Dania-Hallandale section is practically all set and is reported to be making excellent progress. In the Immokalee-Fort Myers section, harvesting is in progress on the winter acreage. These new fields are turning out better sizes than the earlier fall acreage, but are beginning to show the effects of dry weather. Harvesting is in progress on the several hundred acres of winter tomatoes growing at Indiantown and fair to good yields are indicated.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex., Calif.) Planting of the early spring crop in the Lower Valley of Texas started the early part of December and was active during the second half of the month. Seeding of this crop will continue throughout most of January, with a fairly large acreage in prospect. Considerable acreage in the west end of the Valley is being planted earlier than usual; a few fields were up to a good stand the latter part of December, with some plants three to four inches high. If these early plantings come through without any serious set-back, the Lower Valley could have production in good volume by mid-April. Under exceptionally favorable growing conditions production could be available late in March.