



# Commercial Truck Crops

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Washington, D. C.



February 22, 1944

## TRUCK CROP NEWS (As of February 15, 1944)

Commercial truck crops in the winter and early spring producing sections made fairly good progress during the first half of February, but were affected by the usual variety of weather hazards which are to be expected at this time of year.

Weather in Florida during the first half of February was favorable for land preparation but unfavorable for growing crops. Temperatures averaged above normal but rainfall was very light, and practically all truck growing sections are in need of moisture. This dry weather has been most detrimental along the lower East Coast where the main winter crops are now in production.

In Texas, conditions are generally favorable for spring planting to be started in the early districts. The Lower Rio Grande Valley district has been irrigated frequently in the past thirty days. In early dry-land sections, where excess moisture has prevailed for several weeks, conditions have improved. The Valley spring-crop of snap beans is up to a good stand and conditions in other early areas are favorable for planting to be started the last half of this month. Cantaloups, cucumbers, and watermelons are being planted in the earliest sections. Progress of planting in the Texas mid-season vegetable areas, particularly of onions and potatoes, has been retarded by unfavorable weather. Harvesting of winter vegetables made good headway, with total shipments of vegetables continuing to average about 20 percent above those on this date last year. Movement of carrots from the Lower Valley declined materially but beets are moving more actively. Mixed vegetable and spinach shipments account for most of the increased movement this year over last.

In most California districts, growers have been able to cultivate during the past ten days and the field program is generally well along. However, some fields which were wet are still weedy and in need of cultivation. Planting of most spring crops is well along. The ground is now being prepared for crops which will be harvested during the early summer months. In the southern San Joaquin Valley some melon growers have started planting.

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ARTICHOKES: In the California coastal areas, artichokes will be more plentiful the latter part of this month. Cool weather has held back the growth and development of this crop. Practically all of the acreage should be ready for harvest by the first of March, which will in all probability see the peak movement of the deal.

ASPARAGUS: In California, a few growers on the warmer lands have already made light cuttings of asparagus for local market. The February production is dependant upon favorable growing weather. It is not expected that there will be any appreciable rail movement this month, although a few cars may be loaded toward the end of the period.

LIMA BEANS: In Florida, the production of lima beans from the winter acreage continues to be very light. Growing conditions have been unfavorable for this crop, but there should be a slight increase in supplies during the latter part of February.

SNAP BEANS: In the Pompano section of Florida, the recent dry weather has been very detrimental to the snap beans crop. Yields have been reduced and indications now are for a smaller crop than originally expected. This deal has reached its peak and shipments should begin to show a gradual decline. In the Homestead area, where the progress of the crop has been slow, and increase in shipments is expected with the main movement coming during the latter part of February and the first part of March. Planting for the spring crop is under way in the Everglades section. The small acreage which survived the late January frosts is making good progress but it will be the latter part of March before any movement of consequence can be expected from this section. The acreage around Lake Istokpoga is mostly young but is making fair progress. Planting for the spring crop has started in the central counties but it will be March 1 before planting becomes general.

In Texas, planting of the Lower Valley (spring crop) is nearing completion. Early crops in this section are up to a good stand, and promise production about the usual time - beginning the latter part of March or early in April. Conditions are favorable for early planting in the sections outside of the Lower Valley with the earliest districts expected to start the last week in February.

BEEETS: Shipments of Texas beets showed a material gain the first half of February, with most of the increase coming from the Lower Valley. Coastal Bend shipments were active and supplies are increasing. Crops in all districts are in good condition and will furnish production for active movement throughout April.

BROCCOLI: Peak loadings of California broccoli are over in the main producing sections, but considerable acreage is available for harvest at this time in smaller outlying districts. The present broccoli market is not one to encourage heavy loadings.

CABBAGE: California cabbage is in light supply in most areas of the state with the exception of the Imperial Valley, which is at this time approaching peak production. The crop in areas other than Imperial will not be available in appreciable volume until March. In the Imperial Valley, the crop is generally in good condition, and is producing excellent quality cabbage. It is quite likely that a considerable portion of the present crop will be used by the dehydrators. In Texas conditions the first half of February were favorable for active harvesting of cabbage. Shipments were active during this period but were not in proportion to available supplies. Crops in the Coastal Bend section are coming into production and supplies in the Lower Valley should continue plentiful for several weeks. Valley crops are showing improvement in quality, but there is still considerable tonnage of soft cabbage.

CABBAGE, Cont'd: In general, the Florida cabbage crop has made favorable progress in all main producing sections, although some reports, indicating irregular quality and poor growth have been received. This is being attributed to inferior seed. In some outlying areas, particularly in the northern part of the state, the weather has been too dry and cool for satisfactory progress, but for the bulk of the crop conditions have been favorable. Cutting is becoming more selective and only the best quality is being harvested. Available supplies should continue to increase. The cabbage crop in Louisiana made slow growth during the past two weeks because of excessive rain and cold weather. Recent near-freezing temperatures caused some damage to plants.

CARROTS: Harvest of the California carrot crop is now confined to the Imperial Valley except for a few late planted fields scattered throughout the coastal districts. Quality is generally good and roots are taking on the usual high color of the desert deal. During the next three months the Imperial Valley will furnish the bulk of the carrots from California. No appreciable volume is expected from other districts until May. Supplies in Texas are plentiful and quality is improved but movement during the past two weeks was materially below that of the same period last year. The lighter movement from the Lower Valley, where crops have been in fairly good condition all season, was due to a limited demand. Tops in some of the older crops are beginning to deteriorate. Supplies will continue plentiful for the next three months.

CAULIFLOWER: Loadings in California are originating mainly from plantings in the Guadalupe area and in the San Jose-Centerville section. Production will increase for the remainder of the month. Heavier loadings are expected both out of the Guadalupe and out of the Centerville district. At Roseburg, Oregon, temperatures dipped below freezing on February 12 and 13 but there was no serious damage to the winter cauliflower crop, which is concentrated principally in the area. Quality of the crop being marketed is good.

CELERY: Harvest in the Central California districts has passed its peak. A fairly heavy movement will continue during the remainder of February from the Salinas area and from the Santa Maria-Guadalupe district. The bulk of the loadings are now coming from the Chula Vista area in San Diego County. The celery crop is generally in good condition and is producing fairly heavy cuttings. Carlot movement from Florida is approximately 15 percent less than for the same period last year, but this gap should be closed within the next few weeks. Condition of the winter crop in all sections is reported to be good and yields are now turning out satisfactorily. Planting of the spring crop in the Lake Okeechobee section is nearing completion, and is about half finished in the Oviedo section.

CUCUMBERS: In Florida, a few cucumbers are being harvested in the Pompano areas but the condition of the crop in this section is very poor. Practically all of the spring trough acreage in the Wauchula, Center Hill and Webster sections has been planted and is up to a good stand. The open field crop in Lee and Collier counties has been planted. Planting of the main spring acreage around Wauchula and Lake and Sumter counties is under way. Conditions in the Texas early cucumber districts continue to be favorable. Planting in the earliest sections is started and most of the land in the later districts is prepared, with planting expected to start the second half of February. An increase in acreage is indicated in all areas.

EGPLANT: Light supplies of Florida eggplant are still being shipped from fall plantings in the Fort Myers, Winter Garden and Manatee sections. The main winter crop in the Pompano section has been very disappointing, because of the failure of the plants to set fruit. Plants are in good condition and with more favorable weather, it is still possible to get a fair volume from this acreage.

ESCAROLE: In Florida, supplies of escarole are available in the Manatee, Sanford and Lake Okeechobee sections. Conditions have not been favorable for heavy marketings.

LETTUCE: Harvest in the California Imperial Valley is in its peak, and shipments should continue heavy for another 10 days. Quality of the lettuce being harvested is generally good, although sizes are not as large as they were 2 weeks ago. Movement during the next 2 weeks will probably fluctuate with the supply of cars available for loading. Plantings in the central coastal area are being thinned at the present time. The crop is making a slow growth because of the cold weather which has prevailed. As a whole, however, the acreage is generally in good condition.

In Florida, the Boston lettuce deal is practically over in the Sanford and Manatee sections. A light movement is now coming from a small acreage around McIntosh and other scattered areas over the state. Iceberg, which is available in the Ruskin-Manatee area, the Lake Okeechobee section and from small plantings in other areas, is mostly being consumed locally, or in nearby southern markets. Quality is reported to be good.

ONIONS: In South Texas, early spring onion districts, fairly good progress was made. Moisture is becoming scarce in the Raymondville section, but crops are not suffering. Much-needed dry weather has prevailed over the Coastal Bend section, where early crops are showing much better progress than late plantings. Crops in the irrigated Laredo and Winter Garden sections experienced another brief cool spell in February. No damage occurred, but crops in these districts are about two weeks later than usual. Transplanting of the north Texas (late spring) crop is much behind the usual schedule. Unfavorable weather has prevailed over most areas and growers are finding it difficult to get experienced field crews into the territory. Plants are available in large volume. Surplus supplies of plants are being placed in cold storage, and will be accessible on short notice.

Plantings of the California late spring (Bermuda) and early summer onion crops have made good progress during the past six weeks. Growers have been able to cultivate their fields and clean up some of the weed growth which had developed. Crop prospects are good in practically all districts.

GREEN PEAS: The California Imperial Valley is now in the peak of the spring deal. The Valley got a late start because of the frosts in mid-January. In the coastal districts, a few small early planted fields in San Diego, Orange, and Santa Barbara Counties are now being harvested. Production from these early plantings is light and is being used mainly in the local markets. No appreciable quantity is expected out of these areas until March or later, when the larger acreages become available. The movement of peas from Florida continues very light, as this crop was rather severely damaged by frost in late January. Production from plantings in the Lake Okeechobee section, which were made during the latter part of December and the first of January, should begin to move the latter part of February.

GREEN PEPPERS: In Florida, dry weather has affected the main winter acreage in the Pompano section. Plants are in fair condition but matured fruit is small. In the central counties spring-crop plants are being transferred from the seed beds to the open fields.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: In Florida, harvesting of the Dade county crop began the week of January 30. The rate of digging has been slow but should become more active as the season advances. Yields are light because of the severe damage by blight. The bulk of this crop will be

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES, Cont'd: Moved during March. Harvesting of the Fort Myers crop is nearing completion. In the Hastings and LaCrosse sections, planting of the main (early spring) crop has been completed. Some of the early plantings around Hastings are up to a good stand. In Texas, prospects for the early commercial potato crops are favorable. The Lower Valley spring crop escaped damage from the January cold spell and is now making good progress. Early plantings are up to a good stand and conditions are favorable for the late crops. Irrigation has been necessary in some areas recently, but temperatures are fairly favorable for plant growth. Early districts outside of the Lower Valley planted actively the past week, but some areas of the Eagle Lake-Wharton district were too wet for active field work. Planting in central and north-east Texas was getting started the middle of the month. Moisture is plentiful in most of this area, with some sections too wet.

In California, the bulk of the early acreage in Kern County will have been planted in another ten days, although growers will continue planting until March. In Kern County, seed has gone into the ground under very favorable conditions. Some of the early acreage in the Edison district is up to good stands. However, the bulk of the acreage is not yet showing above the ground. Planting has been started in the potato districts of Southern California, and the bulk of the acreage in Riverside and San Bernardino counties will be planted during the next three weeks. Planting of the Louisiana potato crop has been delayed by heavy rains in January and February. Plantings have been irregular and greatly delayed in all areas. Probably not more than one-third of the total acreage had been planted to the middle of February, compared with usual plantings of 90 to 95 percent of the crop by that date.

SHALLOTS: In Louisiana weather during February has been more favorable for shallots, but growth is still slow, and the spring crop continues to be somewhat later than usual. The lack of proper field cultivation is expected to result in low yields.

SPINACH: Shipments in Texas, continue active, with available supplies in excess of demand. Additional dry-land areas have come into production with good quality spinach. All areas will continue to have abundant supplies through most of April.

SQUASH: In Florida, plantings of squash made after the cold weather in late December are coming into bearing. Supplies are increasing and, barring unfavorable weather, a good volume will be maintained. Most of this winter acreage is located along the lower East Coast from Fort Pierce to Homestead.

STRAWBERRIES: The Florida strawberry deal around Plant City is now in full swing. Plants have suffered from lack of moisture where irrigation is not available. Recent high winds whipped the plants rather badly, lowering, to some extent, quality of fruit now being picked. In Louisiana, recent low temperatures killed first settings of blooms and berries. Although plant growth was retarded temporarily, beds generally are in good condition and should resume normal growth without serious interruption if conditions from now on are favorable. Carlot shipments are expected to begin the latter part of March.

ONIONTS: The Florida winter acreage in Dade, Broward and Collier counties is slow in coming into production. Volume has been light and will continue light for the remainder of February. The peak movement is expected during the latter half of March. Condition of the crop in Broward and Collier counties is good. In Dade county, where the largest acreage is located, condition is only fair. The earlier plantings were damaged by frosts and the later plantings are setting very light crops. Much of the acreage which is located near the potato area is badly affected with blight and yields from this acreage will be very low.

TOMATOES, Cont'd: The Florida spring crop in the Indian River and Manatee sections is making good progress. In the central counties, seed beds are in good condition, with some acreage being seeded in the field. Harvesting of the California Imperial Valley tomato crop has been resumed and light shipments will continue for another two weeks. The bulk of the acreage in the Imperial Valley will not be available before May. Production is not expected to increase materially before April 1.

Progress of the Texas Lower Valley (Early Spring) crops has been satisfactory. Surface moisture is becoming depleted in most sections, but most of this acreage is subject to irrigation. Seed beds in the areas (Late Spring) outside of the Lower Valley are in good condition. Setting of plants to the fields has started in a few of the earliest districts, but field work in the important areas (East Texas) will not get started until the early part of March. Moisture conditions in the Late Spring districts are generally favorable, and land is in good condition for earlier-than-usual planting.

WATERMELONS: In the Leesburg, Florida, area, planting is nearing completion, with much of the early acreage up and growing. Indications are that growers will exceed their early intentions in this area. The demand for seed in the sections farther north has been unusually heavy, and a considerable expansion in acreage for the state as a whole is expected.

#### LATE REPORT FROM ARIZONA

BROCCOLI: Harvest of late plantings in the Salt River Valley is now general. Movement in solid carlots is expected to continue at the present rate through February. Considerable volume, however, is moving in mixed cars. Weather continues favorable and exceptionally good quality should be maintained.

CABBAGE: Late plantings in the Salt River and Yuma Valleys are providing present supplies. Shipments in solid carlots should continue in small volume through February. Movement in mixed cars is expected to be significant throughout the marketing period.

CARROTS: Supplies in the Salt River Valley will continue in moderate volume until late plantings come into production in March and April. Harvest in the Yuma Valley should increase late in February. A larger-than-usual proportion of the movement this season has been in mixed cars.

CAULIFLOWER: Most of the fields in the Salt River Valley are now cleaned up and the season's harvest will soon be completed. Moderate temperatures during February have been conducive to favorable development of heads. High quality has been maintained throughout most of the deal.

LETTUCE: Present supplies are coming almost entirely from fields in the Yuma Valley where prospects appear favorable for heavy yields. Light cuttings from some midseason acreage in the Salt River Valley may continue through to the opening of the spring marketing season late in February. Late plantings are developing well and yields are expected to be heavy.