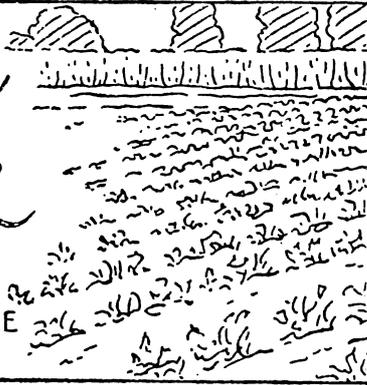


TC-51: 1201

Commercial Truck Crops

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Washington, D.C.

BAE

December 6, 1951

COMMERCIAL TRUCK CROPS FOR FRESH MARKET TRUCK CROP NEWS -- DECEMBER 1, 1951

Weather during the last half of November was generally favorable for vegetable crops in winter-vegetable areas of the Nation. The major exception was in Florida where cold winds and low temperatures November 17-22 caused considerable damage to tender crops. However, conditions in Florida were favorable for the growth of hardy vegetable crops. In Texas, conditions have been favorable for recovery of tender vegetables that escaped serious frost damage in early November and hardy vegetables have made very good progress. Continued mild weather in California has resulted in excellent progress of winter crops. General rains in late November have provided needed moisture in most areas of California. In Arizona, weather during the last half of November was nearly ideal for development of winter vegetables.

The cold weather damage to Florida winter vegetables November 17-22 was rather extensive on snap beans and cucumbers while other tender crops escaped with minor damage. Soil moisture is generally adequate over most of the State and hardy vegetables are making good progress. Vegetable shipments from Florida have been comparatively light to date but the volume will increase materially during December as harvesting of winter crops becomes more active. Harvesting of fall snap beans and tomatoes was near the season peak on December 1.

Harvest of tender vegetable crops in Texas during the last half of November was limited mainly to acreage in the Lower Valley, which escaped serious damage from the early November frost. Light production of eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and squash was also available from the Winter Garden, mostly from fields protected by smudging. Harvest of hardy vegetables such as carrots, lettuce and spinach is increasing seasonally but volume production is not expected until late December or early January. Transplanting of early spring onions has progressed well in the irrigated sections and all non-irrigated onions are in very good condition with a good reserve of soil moisture.

In California, temperatures declined seasonally during the last half of November but no killing frosts occurred during this period. Light frosts on November 23 and 26 caused minor damage to tender crops in cold locations. A general rain covered all areas of the State except the southern San Joaquin Valley and the desert areas November 19 to 21. Northern and central areas of the State received more rain on December 1. These rains caused some delays in harvesting of late fall and early winter crops but provided needed soil moisture in all sections. Harvesting of California vegetables was in a slack period at the end of November, with only carrots and celery moving in substantial volumes.

In Arizona temperatures were moderate during the last half of November with cool nights. Rainfall has been light but added a little water to storage supplies. Due to cool weather vegetables are maturing more slowly than last year. Shipments to December 1 were about one-third below the volume a year earlier.

ARTICHOKES: Winter, 1952 Season (California) Since temperatures have been declining production has been slowed and, shipments have decreased. Quality is generally good. December production will be influenced by temperatures but it is expected to continue to decline.

LIMA BEANS: Winter, 1952 Season (Florida) Reduced plantings in the Pompano-Delray section are making fair to good progress. A few early plantings which survived the mid-October rains have just started to harvest, but it will be after mid-December before any volume develops from this section. Light harvesting is in progress from a small acreage in Fort Pierce section.

SNAP BEANS: Early Fall (3 States) In California, supplies are available in volume from the Coachella Valley, but are expected to decline during the next two weeks. The Coachella crop suffered some damage from a light frost November 26 but supplies were not reduced appreciably. Because of mild weather, growers in Tulare and San Diego Counties have been able to continue picking but supplies from those two districts are limited and quality is poor.

Late Fall: (Fla., Tex.) In Florida, cold winds and low temperatures during the period November 17 to 22 greatly reduced yield prospects, particularly on the acreage for harvest during the last few days of November and the first 10 days of December. If weather is favorable yields on crops harvested during the last 3 weeks of December should be much improved. Peak of harvesting in the important Everglades section has been reached. A good volume is expected to continue throughout the first half of the month and decline rather sharply during the last half of December. In the Pompano section, harvesting will continue rather light until around the 10th of December when a good volume should develop and continue on a fairly stable level. A few fields in Dade County have begun to harvest, but it will be around the first of the year before this deal gets into full production. Light harvesting of pole beans is in progress in Dade County. This fall acreage is generally in fair to good condition and supplies from this area should increase as the month progresses. In the Manatee-Ruskin section, the fall pole bean crop was rather seriously damaged by the recent cold winds and while a light harvesting continues prospective production has been materially reduced. Progress of the Texas crop was seriously retarded in the areas that survived the early November cold weather which was mainly in the east end of the Lower Valley. Yield prospects continue poor and most of the production will be for December harvest, providing no further adverse weather occurs.

BEEETS: Winter, 1952 Season (Texas) Most early crops have made new top growth to overcome the slight damage from the early November low temperatures, and later plantings are in very good condition. Plantings for early season harvest are light but there is a fairly good-sized acreage for mid-winter harvest. A few fields are furnishing a light harvest for mixed car loadings and most of the December production will be utilized for mixed cars or sold to truckers.

BROCCOLI: Fall (California) Production of fall broccoli is fairly heavy and it is expected that shipments will continue at about present levels during the first half of December barring freezing temperatures. Substantial quantities of broccoli are being delivered to freezers restricting the amount available for fresh market outlets.

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CABBAGE: Late Fall (Oreg., Va., N.C., S.C.) In South Carolina, the crop is in only fair to good condition. Heaviest movement is expected around December 15, with light supplies being available until about mid-January.

Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) California cabbage is still in light supply in Central and South Coast producing districts. As usual the bulk of the cabbage is being used locally but an occasional car is being shipped from the Salinas-Watsonville district. No significant increase in supplies is anticipated until production gets under way in Imperial Valley about mid-December. In Texas, the small acreage of young cabbage that was hurt by the early November cold spell has practically all recovered and started making good growth the past two weeks. All plantings were in exceptionally good condition the latter part of November. A large part of this year's irrigated acreage was seeded direct to the fields and stands are very good. Some additional acreage may be planted when thinning of some fields is necessary. Growers' present plans, however, are for most of this year's production to be for mid-winter harvest with the bulk of the crop out of the fields by the middle of March. The Lower Valley is starting a very light harvest from some seed-bed plants but production from the main plantings in the Valley is not expected to be available until January and February. A small acreage in the Coastal Bend will furnish some production around January 10, but the main harvest in that area is not expected until late January and early February. Most non-irrigated crops have enough moisture reserve to carry crops through most of December. Recent weather conditions have been favorable for the early crop in Florida and young plantings are making good progress. Light cutting has started from a small acreage in the Everglades which survived the early October rains. The crop in the State as a whole is slightly delayed and it will be the latter part of December before any significant volume develops.

CARROTS: Fall (10 States) With an adequate supply of labor available in all California producing districts during the last half of November, production increased and shipments have been fairly heavy. Production at near present levels should continue for another two weeks. Heaviest shipments will continue to originate from the Salinas Valley but outside districts are now contributing substantial daily shipments. Oxnard is shipping about three cars daily. The Santa Maria and Lompoc areas are providing an increasing volume and harvest got under way last week in the San Joaquin Valley at Huron and Cortez. Quality has declined due to the lateness of the season. There is considerable variation in root quality and tops are long and require considerable stripping of blighted and dead leaves.

Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., La.) Shipments from Arizona have been light so far with only a few cars a day but volume is expected to pick up during the next few days at all shipping points. The crop is in excellent condition and is making good progress. Crops in all areas of Texas continued to make good growth, and supplies from the earliest plantings in the Winter Garden were showing a substantial increase the latter part of the month. First harvest started in the Uvalde section and shipments from the Carrizo Springs section started the latter part of November. Although growers' plans for light plantings for late season harvest continue, supplies during December, January and February are expected to be plentiful. The Lower Valley crop was planted later than usual and this area does not expect production in volume until after the early part of January. The Valley also expects their major movement through the mid-winter months. A small acreage in the non-irrigated Coastal Bend is growing nicely, but production is not expected until late January or early February. Although plantings for mid-winter harvest were heavy, the total acreage for the season is expected to be lighter than usual.

CAULIFLOWER: Fall (N.Y., Mich., Oreg.) Marketings of Long Island cauliflower dropped off sharply after the first ten days of November and daily volume was rather irregular during the last half of the month as a result of low temperatures. Volume was heavy on Saturday auctions, totalling about 28,000 crates on November 24. Temperatures of 17-20 degrees on the morning of November 28 ended harvest in many fields. A light volume of generally poor quality is expected to continue through the first half of December.

Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) California production is increasing but volume is still below normal levels for this season of the year. Production during December will increase in all districts and the present light rail movement from Central and Southern California will probably expand. The bulk of the present shipments are originating from the Los Angeles area but cars are also loaded at Santa Maria, Watsonville and Centerville. Southern California production consists primarily of Snowball but pearl types are being harvested in Central Coast districts. Both rains and mild temperatures have been favorable for production. In Texas, a light harvest was started in the Eagle Pass section the latter part of November and considerable acreage in the Winter Garden is expected to be ready for harvest starting the early part of December. The small acreage in the Lower Valley is later than usual and is not expected to be in production until around mid-January. Crops in all sections recovered fully from the early November cold spell, and good quality cauliflower is in prospect. Condition of the Florida crop is reported to be generally good. The recent cold weather caused some tip burn but this is not expected to have any material effect on the future production. Transplanting continues active in the Manatee-Ruskin and Sanford-Winter Garden sections. Light harvesting is expected to start in the Manatee-Ruskin section around Christmas.

CELERY: Late Fall (Calif., N.J.) In California, production has continued heavy with harvest active in all producing districts. About half of the shipments have been originating in the Stockton area. Production is expected to increase during the next week with shipments reaching a peak by December 10. Volume will decline after that date and most of the acreage should be cleaned up by the end of the month. Some late fields will remain for harvest in January but no significant volume is anticipated. Quality in all districts has been improving. Sizes are generally large and considerable stripping is required to make small packs.

Winter, 1952 Season (Fla., Calif., Ariz.) Harvest of California's winter crop has begun at Chula Vista and Oxnard with most of the carlots originating from the latter point. Carlots are expected from San Diego County this week but, unless market conditions improve, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant volume from there during the first half of December. Cutting of the Southern San Joaquin Valley crop will start this week. Winter celery has made excellent progress in all districts to date. Recent rains have been particularly beneficial to celery in San Diego County. Recent weather conditions have been favorable for the Florida crop and marked improvement has been noted during the past two weeks. Acreage which came through the heavy rains of early October is still backward in its development and will generally produce comparatively light yields. Light harvesting is in progress in the Zellwood and Everglades sections. The volume from the State will show a gradual increase as the month progresses, but it will be after the Christmas holidays before harvesting becomes general.

Spring: (Fla., Calif.) The setting of the California spring crop to the field began in the Venice district of Los Angeles County on November 23. Early fields will be set during December.

SWEET CORN: Fall, Winter and Spring (Fla.) Light harvesting continues on the early fall acreage with most of the production at this time coming from the Everglades. Light harvesting has started at Fort Myers and a few early fields in Dade County will harvest in early December. Quality is fair to good and a light volume is in prospect throughout the remainder of the month. Planting for winter harvest continues in South Florida areas with the Fort Myers, Pompano-Boynton, Dade County, the Everglades, and the Manatee-Ruskin sections expected to be the principal points of production. Planting for spring harvest in the important Everglades section is expected to get started in early January.

CUCUMBERS: Late Fall (Florida.) The cold winds and low temperatures in Florida during the period November 17 to 22 caused extensive damage to the remaining fall cucumber crop, particularly in the important Fort Myers-Immokalee and Wauchula-Manatee areas. Yields on the acreage in production at this time were drastically cut and most of the younger plantings were either killed or seriously damaged. The fall deal in the Wauchula and Manatee-Ruskin sections is practically over and production from the Fort Myers-Immokalee area will be very light during December. Very light harvesting is in progress from a small acreage in the Fort Pierce section. The small acreage in the Pompano-Indiantown area should provide a light volume after the middle of December.

EGGPLANT: Fall (Fla., Tex.) The eggplant acreage in the Fort Myers and Pompano sections of South Florida has made fair to good recovery since the heavy rains of early and mid-October. Light harvesting is in progress in these sections and the volume should show a gradual increase as the month progresses. Light volume is also moving from the Wauchula and Manatee-Ruskin fall acreage. Eggplant yields were reduced materially in all sections of Texas by the low temperatures in early November. The remaining production in most fields in the Winter Garden and Eagle Pass sections was destroyed and some plants were damaged in the Valley. A light harvest from the Valley has continued, and will carry on through December, if weather conditions permit.

ESCAROLE: Winter (Florida) The cooler weather in Florida has been favorable for the growth and development of escarole and chicory. Seeding and transplanting has been active and indications are that the season's plantings will compare favorably with last year's acreage. Recent market demand has been good and growers are cutting these crops just as fast as they reach suitable maturity for market. Supplies are available in all of the principal producing areas at this time.

LETTUCE: Fall (6 States) The fall lettuce deal in the Central Coast sections and the San Joaquin Valley of California has been concluded for all practical purposes. A few cars will continue to be loaded from late fields at Alhambra and local market supplies will be available from all districts during the next two weeks. Quality at the present time is very ordinary. The Oxnard district will provide a few carlots and supplies for local markets throughout December.

WINTER LETTUCE: Winter (Ariz., Calif., Fla., Tex.) In Arizona the lettuce market has weakened slightly but is still very good. Volume is nearing 200 cars a day with production just starting. Heavier movement is expected in the next few days. Cool weather has slowed growth but has been beneficial to the crop from a quality standpoint. Heads are firming nicely and packing mostly 4's. Harvesting of California winter lettuce has been under way at Blythe for two weeks but it was late in November before appreciable volume began to move from there. A further increase in production is expected during the first half of December and 400 to 450 cars are expected to be loaded during that period by rail and truck. In the Imperial Valley the first car was loaded November 30 but production will remain light until around December 15. Although early lettuce fields in the Desert areas show spotty stands they are

LETTUCE: Winter (Cont'd.) expected to produce fairly well, particularly if market conditions remain favorable. Recent weather has favored the crop and good quality lettuce running heavy to 4's is in prospect. Mid-season fields are in excellent condition and late fields are making good progress. Early lettuce plantings in Florida are in fair to good condition. Seeding and transplanting continues in the Sanford-Zellwood, Manatee-Ruskin, and Everglades sections. Light harvesting of Boston and Romaine has started in the Central Florida and Everglades sections and supplies of these types should improve as the month progresses. Very light harvesting of Iceberg has started in the Webster-Manatee-Ruskin section, but it will be late December before any significant volume is available in all of the principal producing areas. Land is being prepared for the late winter acreage in the McIntosh section. Shipments of Texas winter lettuce are coming from the Carrizo Springs and Uvaldo sections of the Winter Garden, where crops are in good condition and show promise of good yields. The comparatively small acreage in the Lower Valley this year was planted later than usual. A light harvest may start the latter part of December, but most of the acreage is for January and February harvest.

ONIONS: Early Spring (Texas) Transplanting of irrigated acreage in south Texas was started the early part of November and field work was still active the latter part of the month. Considerable acreage was planted a little earlier than usual and plants in some of the earliest fields have started growing. Plants are plentiful and transplanting can continue through December without any unusual delay in harvest. Early seeded crops in the non-irrigated sections--Raymondville, Coastal Bend, and Wilson-Karnes--are in very good condition. The surface moisture these areas received the latter part of November was all that was needed to complete planting and it stimulated the top growth of the early plantings. Most non-irrigated sections have a good sub-soil moisture reserve.

GREEN PEPPERS: Fall (Va., Fla., Tex.) Supplies of peppers from the fall acreage in Florida have been extremely light, but if weather conditions are favorable, the movement should show a gradual increase and reach a fair volume during the second half of December. Current supplies are coming from the Wauchula-Manatee, Fort Myers, and Pompano sections. All of the fall acreage which survived the heavy rains in October has made very slow recovery, but this acreage will be the source of supplies until the new acreage comes into production. The small acreage in the Manatee-Wauchula area is generally in poor condition and only very light yields can be expected. In the Fort Myers section, the condition of the crop is ordinary to fair except for the youngest plantings which are generally making good progress. At Pompano, most of the early plantings are in poor to fair condition, but acreage seeded after the middle of October is generally making good progress. This later acreage is not expected to come into active production until late January or February. Fall peppers in the Lower Valley of Texas that were hurt by the early November cold spell have made a good recovery. Most of the damage was to young plants but they are expected to furnish production during December if favorable conditions continue. Harvest from the older plantings in the Valley has been active the past two weeks but supplies have been relatively light because of the smaller early acreage and the retarded progress caused by the early November cold spell. The small acreage in the Laredo section is making very slow recovery and will need at least two more weeks of good growing weather if any production is to be expected.

POTATOES: Winter, 1952 Season (Tex., Fla.) Planting of winter potato acreage in Texas was a little later than usual but conditions have been favorable. Most of the section where this crop is planted escaped the early November low temperatures. A light harvest will start around the middle of December but most of the crop will not be ready until late December and the early part of January. In the Everglades section of Florida most of the potato acreage which survived the heavy rains of early October is in fair to good condition. However, the set of tubers is reported to be below normal. Digging on this acreage should start immediately after the Christmas holidays. Winter potatoes in the Fort Myers and Dade County sections, are generally reported to be making fair to good progress.

SPINACH: Winter, 1952 Season (Tex., La., Calif.) In Texas conditions have been favorable for early plantings of winter spinach to make good growth and for the planting of additional acreages for later season harvest. Harvest of good quality spinach was becoming active in the Winter Garden by the latter part of the month, and light cutting at Eagle Pass was just getting started. Supplies from the Eagle Pass section are not expected to be plentiful until around mid-December. A small acreage in the Coastal Bend is expected to be ready the early part of December but most of the plantings in that area are for late December and January harvest. The Raymondville section does not expect to have production until around the middle of the month, and most of the early harvest in this section will be used for mixed car loadings. Considerable acreage is planted in rows this year and the early harvest is furnishing good yields.

SQUASH: Fall (Florida) Supplies of Florida squash are very light at this time and are coming from widely scattered acreage in the Central and South Florida areas. Planting in the important Pompano section was heavy immediately following the heavy rains of mid-October and a sharp increase in volume is indicated from this area in early December. The period of cold winds and low temperatures of mid-November caused slight damage to acreage growing at that time but much of this damage is expected to be overcome with favorable growing weather.

RASPBERRIES: Winter, 1952 Season (Florida) The winter strawberry acreage in the Plant City-Wauchula-Webster and Starke-Weber sections of Florida is generally reported to be in fair to good condition. However, individual growers' reports indicate a wide range in the prospects. In some localities the crop has suffered from lack of moisture. Irrigated crops are generally in good condition. The crop is generally delayed in its maturity and it is just now beginning to put out a good bloom.

TOMATOES: Early Fall (California) The fall shipping deal in California is over. Local market supplies are still available in several districts but are declining rapidly as the result of recent rains. Production will probably continue in a light way throughout December in San Diego County if frost holds off.

Late Fall: (Texas, Fla.) In Texas, most of the late fall acreage at Laredo had furnished one picking by the latter part of November. The extent of additional harvest will depend on development and quality of the remaining production. Small tomatoes failed to make much size following the November cold spell and much of the remaining production may be held for delivery to canning plants. Light carlot movement has continued from the Lower Valley and loading of trucks has been active. Considerable late acreage in the Lower Valley made very good yields with the second half of November and with continued good growing weather, the early crop is expected to have a light production during most of December. The fall

TOMATOES: Late Fall (Cont'd.) tomato crops in the Fort Pierce and Immokalee areas of Florida are now in their peak production period. Harvesting on many early fields has been completed with the remaining volume to come from the later fall plantings. In the Manatee-Ruskin section, active harvesting is in progress, but the average maturity is considerably behind normal due to the excessive rains in October. Crops on higher ground are in good condition, but those on the heavier and poorer drained soils show only fair prospects. The cold winds and low temperatures of mid-November caused further deterioration in the quality of tomatoes for harvest during late November and early December. This condition is now improving and with favorable weather during December, the average quality of shipments from the State should be much improved. In Dade County, crops have made good progress in recent weeks and light harvesting is expected during the latter half of December from the pineland plantings. In the Dania-Hallandale section, seed beds are in good condition and the supply of plants is ample. Transplanted fields are looking good at this time and approximately half of this acreage was set by December 1. With favorable weather, this section as a whole is expected to be in active harvest about 3 weeks earlier than last year. Young plantings for winter harvest in the Immokalee section are generally reported to be in good condition. In the Trail section of Collier County, little or no transplanting has been done up to this time, but is expected to get under way during the first half of December.

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