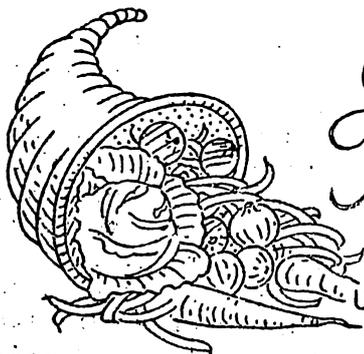
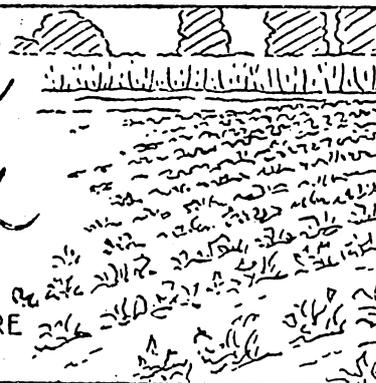


TC-52: 203

Commercial Truck Crops



BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Washington, D. C.

BAE

February 21, 1952

COMMERCIAL TRUCK CROPS FOR FRESH MARKET TRUCK CROP NEWS -- FEBRUARY 15, 1952

Weather conditions in the winter and spring vegetable areas were quite variable during the first half of February, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. In Florida a tropical storm passed over the southern part of the State the night of February 2 bringing high winds and heavy rains which caused considerable damage to vegetable crops. A cold period occurring February 6 to 8 brought frosts to Central and North Florida. In the Carolinas temperatures ranged from the low 70's down to freezing with excessive rainfall occurring in many areas. Unseasonably warm weather continued in Texas with a brief cool spell at mid-month. Lack of rainfall is critical in all vegetable areas of this State. Weather in the Arizona vegetable producing area was on the cool side during the first half of February. California temperatures were favorable for growth and development of crops planted for spring harvest and for mature crops ready for harvest. Weather in this State has been generally favorable for drying out wet fields which had been hampering current harvest and the planting of spring crops.

Temperature changes in North Carolina were quite rapid, ranging from the low 70's to sharp freezes. Ample to excessive rainfall was received in all the early truck producing areas, and by February 15, soil moisture supplies generally were satisfactory. In the Elizabeth City-Currituck area, frequent rains have delayed potato planting, but as yet this delay has not been serious.

In South Carolina, weather conditions during the first half of February were somewhat unfavorable for best progress of truck crops. Extremely wet weather, frost, and cold caused considerable damage to plants just coming up and delayed planting of Irish potatoes, especially in the Charleston and Beaufort areas.

Weather conditions in Florida during the first half of February were quite variable. The tropical storm which passed over the extreme southern part of the State on the night of February 2 brought high winds and rather heavy rains which caused considerable damage to vegetable crops, particularly in the Pompano, Dade County, and Immokalee sections. A cold period during February 6 to 8 was preceded by local rains with frosts occurring in North and Central Florida. Damage from this frost was comparatively light, but some unprotected tender crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and watermelons were killed. On February 15-16, moderate to fairly heavy rains occurred in North and Central Florida. Soil moisture in most of the vegetable sections is ample at this time. Temperatures for the most part have been beneficial for hardy crops, particularly in the North and Central Florida sections. In the South Florida areas, cool damp nights and rather warm days have aided the development of disease which has been particularly active since the first of the month. Growers will need

a rather long period of favorable weather to bring these diseases under control and get their crops back into a satisfactory state of growth. The overall volume of produce moving from the State during the first half of the month continued at a rather high level, but the effects of the early February storm showed up in a reduced volume of such crops as beans, tomatoes, squash, and eggplant. Harvesting continues active in all of the major winter producing sections and while there will be some fluctuation in the shipments of individual commodities, the total volume from the State is expected to continue around current levels for several weeks. Planting of spring crops in the South Florida area, with the exception of the Everglades, is practically completed. In the Everglades, planting of spring beans and corn will continue well into March. In the Central Florida sections, planting of tender spring crops is well advanced and is active in the North Florida area.

Developments in the Texas winter and early spring commercial vegetable areas were somewhat unsatisfactory. Unseasonably warm weather continued until mid-month when a brief cool spell occurred. Lack of rainfall is critical in all sections, and the supply of irrigation water in the Lower Valley is very low. The continued lack of moisture in the non-irrigated vegetable areas has resulted in most of the remaining winter growing crops being abandoned and preparation for spring planting being retarded. The water supply for irrigation in the Laredo, Winter Garden, and Eagle Pass sections has been satisfactory except in scattered areas depending entirely on wells. Crops in these sections have continued to make good progress and planting of spring crops is well along.

Light frost occurred in the Salt River Valley of Arizona on the mornings of February 13 to 15. However, at this point in the season damage to growing crops was negligible. Conditions were generally favorable in the Yuma area. Crop development may have been retarded slightly by the cooler temperatures, but there was no frost in this area.

Temperatures in California vegetable producing sections have been generally favorable for the production of mature crops, and the growth and development of crops planted for spring harvest during the past two weeks. Light showers fell at Bakersfield and Santa Maria northward on February 11 but Southern California points have not received any rain since about mid-January. Light, local frosts occurred in scattered Northern California localities on February 13 but minimum temperatures did not drop below 32 degrees. The general absence of rainfall and the presence of good drying weather were welcomed by growers in the Central part of the State where wet fields have been a problem. In Southern California and in many San Joaquin Valley and Central Coast districts fair weather and higher temperatures have dried out fields sufficiently that planting of spring crops could be resumed. Total vegetable production in the State is expected to decline during the next two weeks due to lettuce and celery harvests having passed their peaks. However, there will be an increase in volume of broccoli and cauliflower and possibly carrots during this period.

ARTICHOKE: Winter (Calif.) Artichoke supplies, which have been seasonally light, are expected to continue to increase during the next two weeks. Some frost discoloration is still occurring but the bulk of the current supply is frost-free and quality is improving as young buds not damaged by frost reach maturity. New vine growth is being hampered by wet fields on low ground which may reduce the production of spring artichokes somewhat.

ASPARAGUS: Early Spring (6 States) Favorable warm weather during the past two weeks has stimulated the growth of asparagus in the California Delta and light cuttings have been made. The first crates were harvested on February 4 but only a very limited volume has been harvested since that date. If favorable weather continues, the first full car of asparagus from the Delta should be loaded during the week of February 25. A limited amount of asparagus is now being cut from fields in Borrego Valley in San Diego County, Imperial Valley and Southern San Joaquin Valley.

LIMA BEANS: Winter (Fla.) The winter lima bean crop in the Pompano-Delray section is only in fair condition, having been badly whipped by the heavy rains and high winds of February 2. Supplies during the first half of the month declined materially and it is expected that supplies will continue at reduced levels for several weeks.

SNAP BEANS: Winter (Fla.) The snap bean crop in the Pompano and Dade County sections is only in fair condition, having been materially damaged by the early February storm. The volume during the first half of the month declined materially from the previous semi-monthly period and the effects of the storm are expected to continue to be reflected in reduced volume for the remainder of the month. Younger plantings which had not reached the blooming stage at the time of the storm, with favorable weather for the next two weeks, are expected to produce near normal yields. The prospective volume of pole beans from Dade County was materially reduced by the storm. That acreage which was staked with sesbania was most severely damaged, but all crops were badly whipped. With favorable weather, the quality and production should improve during the latter part of the month.

Early Spring (Fla., Texas) Planting of the spring crop of snap beans in the important Everglades section of Florida is actively underway. The bulk of the acreage should be planted in February, but some late planting will continue until around the middle of March. A reduced acreage is in prospect. Planting in the Central Florida sections has been in progress since early February and light planting has started in North Florida. Planting of pole beans in the Manatee-Ruskin and Plant City sections started in late January and early February.

BEETS: Winter (Texas) Conditions were favorable for continued good progress, and both yields and quality have been very good. Solid carlot loadings have been moving in fair volume and considerable production has been moving in mixed cars. Supplies will continue to be available in fair volume from the Lower Valley for the next 45 days. The small acreage in the non-irrigated Coastal Bend failed to survive the long dry spell in that area and has been abandoned.

Spring (La., S. Car., N. Car., Va.) In South Carolina, the spring beet crop is in only fair condition. Recent cold weather caused considerable damage to plants just coming up and has necessitated replanting in some areas. The planting of beets in North Carolina has been completed and seed is now sprouting, but as yet few have surfaced. Soils were rather dry in this area until the second

BEETS: Spring (Cont'd) week of February when rains replenished soil moisture supplies. Temperatures generally have been too cool for rapid germination and growth. At this time the crop is considered to be about two weeks earlier than a year ago when most of the acreage had to be replanted due to February freezes.

BROCCOLI: Spring (Calif.) Broccoli production in the Central Coast area continues at a moderate level with supplies moving both to fresh market and freezer outlets. Shipments are expected to increase late in the month when early fields of spring broccoli mature. In Imperial Valley production has passed its peak and will decline until the deal cleans up during the next ten days. Quality has been very good in Imperial and fair to good at Central Coast points.

CABBAGE: Winter (Calif., Ariz., Texas, Fla.) Supplies continue to be available from Imperial Valley of California but the peak of harvest has been passed there and yields have been reduced by early January freezes. Cabbage is becoming available for harvest in South Coastal areas and production should show a moderate increase there during the next two weeks. This area should be in heavy production during March. Continued warm weather in Texas and lack of water for irrigation has resulted in lowering yield prospects in the important Lower Valley area, and growers in the Coastal Bend have given up any hope of production from the fair-sized acreage in that area. Some areas of the Valley, mainly those near the source of water supply, have been able to continue irrigating and production from this acreage has been of fairly good quality. Sizes in all areas have been small, however, and the quality of crops that have been neglected has deteriorated. Some partially harvested fields have been abandoned and some growers were considering abandoning some of the acreage that was being held for late season harvest. The brief cool spell around the middle of the month was not of long enough duration to be of much benefit, and unless conditions show a material improvement soon much of the prospective late production may not be held for harvest. The condition of cabbage in Florida ranges from fair to good. Recent weather conditions have been favorable and quality is improving. The volume during the first half of February continued to show an increase over the previous semi-monthly period. The deal is now in its peak period of production and with favorable weather, a continued good volume is in prospect throughout the remainder of February and March. Now that the market has declined to a relatively low level, the quality requirements are higher than they were earlier in the season and a considerable amount of poor quality cabbage is being left in the field. Practically all transplanting for late harvest has been completed.

Early Spring (5 States) The spring cabbage crop in South Carolina is in good condition but this varies by areas. In the Beaufort area, the crop is off to a good start and has been side dressed. Recent frost in the Charleston area caused some damage and reports indicate that plants are beginning to form small heads due to extremely wet weather.

Late Spring (8 States) The condition of North Carolina's cabbage crop is quite variable. In the Currituck area, planting was completed in January. Due to frequent freezes, however, survival was low and stands are ragged. Plants started growth during January and were hit hard by February freezes. It is difficult to determine at this time, however, the extent of bud damage caused by those freezes. In the Pamlico-Carteret County area, setting was becoming general by mid-February and by March 1 virtually all the acreage will be set. Practically all the home grown plants were killed by freezes in November and December. Consequently, most of the acreage in this area will be set to Copenhagen instead of the round Dutch variety. The plant supply is adequate to meet growers needs.

CARROTS: Winter (Calif., Ariz., Texas, La.) Shipments of California carrots from the Imperial Valley are continuing in good volume for this season of the year and shipments during the next two weeks should hold at about present levels unless market conditions change harvest plans. Quality of Imperial Valley carrots has shown considerable variation this season with some fields producing carrots which were off quality in both roots and tops. However, general quality should improve as the younger fields mature. A small volume of topped stock from fall plantings is moving daily from Central California points. The Phoenix area of Arizona is still shipping some topped carrots due to the frosts in January, but volume of supplies will continue relatively light from the valley's small acreage. Harvest of carrots was exceptionally active the past two weeks in Texas and supplies are ample for continued active harvest for the next 45 days. The Lower Valley has some acreage for April harvest and a light movement may continue into the early part of April. Growers in the Winter Garden expect most of their acreage to be harvested by the latter part of March. Conditions the first half of February were favorable for crops in all sections to continue to make good growth and quality of both top and root growth has been very good.

Spring (Calif., Ariz.) Increased supplies of Arizona carrots can be expected from the Yuma area in the next few days as the spring crop comes into production.

CAULIFLOWER: Winter (Calif., Ariz., Texas, Fla.) Active movement of cauliflower in Texas was practically over by the middle of February. Light supplies are expected from the Eagle Pass section the remainder of the month, but most of the remaining production will be used by truckers. The condition of the Florida cauliflower crop remaining for harvest continues fair to good. The volume from the State improved slightly during the first half of February. A continued good volume is in prospect during the second half of the month, but supplies are expected to decline in early March. Supplies are currently coming from the Manatee-Ruskin and Sanford-Winter Garden sections with a light volume originating in the Hastings and Dade County sections.

Early Spring (Calif., Oreg.) Shipments of California cauliflower have picked up substantially during the past week at Santa Maria as a result of declining supplies from competing areas. Freezers received much of the production at Santa Maria until shipments were increased there. At present, a limited amount of cauliflower is being harvested around Los Angeles, and in Monterey and Alameda Counties for local and northwest markets. Shipments from California are expected to increase late in the month as additional acreages become available for harvest and quality improves. Quality generally is fair to good in all districts but warm daytime temperatures have adversely affected some fields.

CELERY: Winter (Fla., Calif., Ariz.) The winter celery crop in Florida continues to make fair to good progress. The recent cool weather and rains have been beneficial. The winter deal is now in its peak level of harvest. The acreage cut and the volume moved to date are both ahead of last year, but yields have not averaged as high as they did last winter. Improved marketing conditions have permitted growers to harvest a heavy volume of celery in San Diego County, California during the past two weeks. Most of the remaining acreage will be cut during February and only limited supplies will be available during the first half of March. Quality continues good for the bulk of the supply but some blight, pink rot and pithy celery is being noted. A small volume of celery continues to be available from plantings in Orange, Kern and Tulare Counties.

CELERY: Spring (Cont'd) Setting of spring celery in Florida has been completed at Sarasota and is near completion in the Everglades. Transplanting is well advanced in the Oviedo area and is active in the Zellwood and Oklawaha-Island Grove section of North Florida.

SWEET CORN: Winter (Florida) The mid-winter sweet corn crop in the South Florida area is only in fair condition and yields on the acreage harvested to date have been below normal expectations. Improved moisture conditions along the lower East Coast have benefitted younger plantings and if disease and insects can be controlled, some improvement in future yields can be expected. In the important Everglades section, conditions have been favorable for growth, but temperatures have also been favorable for the development of disease. Planting is active in this section and is expected to continue well into March. Planting has started on the sand lands in the Central Florida area and land is being prepared in the important Zellwood section with seeding expected to get underway in late February.

CUCUMBERS: Winter (Florida) The high winds and heavy rains of February 2 greatly reduced the production prospects of mid-winter cucumbers in the South Florida area. The Immokalee-Fort Myers area is the principal source of supply at this time with scattered harvesting coming from the Pompano, Fort Pierce, and Dade County sections. Imports from Cuba are being repacked at points along the East Coast, principally Pompano and constitute the bulk of the movement from this area.

Early Spring (Fla., Texas) Some replanting of spring cucumbers was necessitated by the early February storm in the South Florida areas. However, most of this spring acreage was reasonably young and with favorable weather, should overcome most of the setbacks incurred. The covered acreage in the Wauchula and Webster sections of Central Florida has made fair progress during recent weeks. Open field planting in the Wauchula section started in late January, but most of this acreage was seeded during the first half of the month. Planting of the open field acreage in the Webster-Winter Garden section is now in progress. In the Manatee-Ruskin section, where a reduced spring acreage is in prospect, occasional early fields are up and growing at this time, but most of the acreage was seeded during the first half of February.

EGGPLANT: Winter (Florida) The winter eggplant crop in the Pompano and Fort Myers sections received considerable damage from the high winds and heavy rains on February 2. This damage has been reflected by a reduced volume during the first half of February compared to the movement during the previous semi-monthly period. It is expected that this reduced volume will continue during the remainder of February. With continued favorable weather, this winter acreage should make some recovery and production prospects are expected to improve during March. A light volume is available from the Everglades and from small widely scattered plantings in other South Florida sections.

Spring (Florida) In the South Florida areas, the younger acreage, particularly in the Pompano and Everglades sections which will mostly furnish production for spring harvest, are expected to make a fair recovery from the unfavorable weather in early February. Transplanting continues in progress on the spring acreage in the Plant City section and seed beds in the North Florida sections are reported to be in fair to good condition.

ESCAROLE: Winter (Florida) Escarole and chicory shipments continued in fair volume during the first half of February although slightly below the movement reported for the previous semi-monthly period. Recent weather conditions have been favorable for these crops and a continued good volume is in prospect during the remainder of the winter period. Most of the production at this time is coming from the Everglades supplemented by light volume from the Zellwood, Sanford-Oviedo, and Manatee-Ruskin sections.

LETTUCE: Winter (Ariz., Calif., Fla., Tex.) In California, recent warm weather in Imperial Valley advanced the maturity of mid-season lettuce fields and shipments during the past two weeks have been heavy. Peak of production has been passed, however, and volume will decline from now on. At Blythe, harvest of the fall and winter acreage has been practically completed. Quality in the Desert areas is generally excellent although some cracked ribs and slime have appeared because of recent warmer weather. The volume of lettuce harvested in Florida during the first half of February declined considerably from the good volume moved during the last half of January. This decrease is largely attributed to the prolonged period of warm weather. Conditions since late January have been more favorable and the acreage remaining for harvest is mostly reported to be in fair to good condition. The Everglades and Manatee-Ruskin sections are the principal sources of supply at this time with scattered light harvestings available in the Webster, Sanford-Winter Garden and Samsula sections of Central Florida. The young plantings at Zellwood are generally in good condition. At McIntosh, growers report some trouble with disease. A fair volume is expected to be available from the State during the remainder of February with declining supplies in prospect during March. In Texas, supplies in good volume were available in the Lower Valley during the past two weeks, but harvest in this area is expected to be over by the latter part of the month or early March. Plantings in the Winter Garden for late harvest have made good progress and a light movement from the mid-winter acreage has continued from that area. Quality has been generally good, despite the unseasonably warm weather which has prevailed during most of the season.

Early Spring (Ariz., Calif., Ga., S.Car., N.Car.) Some increase in shipments from the Yuma area in Arizona is expected to develop during the third week of the month and gather momentum as the spring crop comes into heavier volume. The Salt River Valley will be a couple of weeks later than last year due to cool weather. Shipments of spring lettuce from Phoenix are expected to start in volume about March 10. Spring plantings in California made good progress during the past two weeks and growers have been able to thin most of their early plantings. Favorable weather has dried additional acreages sufficiently to permit growers to work the ground and plant during the past two weeks. In South Carolina, the crop is in very good condition with little damage reported to date. Although the crop is in various stages of growth, most of it is in the thinning stage. In North Carolina, 75 to 80 percent of the acreage had been set by February 15. Temperatures generally have been too cool and plants have made little growth either in the plant beds or in the field. Most growers are setting plants this year in preference to sowing in the field. Setting will be completed prior to the first of March. The crop generally is considered about two weeks earlier than last year.

ONIONS: Early Spring (Texas) Conditions are unchanged from those of the last half of January in practically all early spring onion areas-- mostly warm and dry. A very brief cool spell the early part of the month and another around mid-February were of too short duration to affect plant growth and temperatures were not low enough to cause any significant delay in the rapid progress that

ONIONS: Early Spring (Cont'd) crops in the irrigated sections have made. Some growers have withheld their usual irrigation for the purpose of retarding growth. Prospects in the non-irrigated sections, especially the Coastal Bend, have declined materially. Considerable acreage of early plantings have started bulbing and yields from this acreage are expected to average very light unless rains occur soon. Growth of late plantings has stopped and the usual care of much of this acreage will be neglected unless moisture conditions improve soon. The continued lack of rainfall has been critical for several weeks. Both irrigated and non-irrigated onions in the Raymondville section have been without moisture for some time as water for irrigation in this area has been limited during the entire growing season and part of the area has been without any water all season.

Late Spring (Calif., Ariz., La., Tex., Ga.) Scattered sections of the north Texas onion area received from light to moderate rains the past week, mainly around Dallas and Ferris. Growth of early plantings was revived and some additional acreages were planted, but all plantings will need additional moisture soon if normal progress is to be made. Conditions are still unfavorable for the planting of crops in the central part of the area and much of the outlying area north of Dallas is still without sufficient moisture for transplanting to be started.

GREEN PEAS: Winter (Fla., Tex., Calif.) Harvest in Imperial Valley, California, is now under way and production should continue until about March 10. Supplies will not be heavy at any time due to the light acreage planted this year. Current production is moving to local markets and in mixed lots.

Early Spring (Calif., Miss., S.Car., N.Car.) In California, a light harvest continues from early pole fields in the coastal sections from San Luis Obispo County south. Most supplies are being utilized locally. In the Holly Hill area of South Carolina, where most of the State's green pea crop is centered, the crop is in good condition and nearing the blooming stage. Scattered plantings are being made in other sections of the State but are of less importance from a commercial standpoint.

GREEN PEPPERS: Winter (Fla.) The storm of February 2 struck the important Pompano section just as the winter crop was getting into full production. Plants were badly whipped by the high winds, considerable young fruit was blown off, and production prospects materially lowered. The volume from the State during the first half of the month improved considerably over that shipped during the last half of January but not as much as expected before the storm. With continued favorable weather the crop is expected to recover some of the setback. Although production will be somewhat lower than earlier indications, a continued good volume is in prospect during the remainder of the winter season. The Pompano section will continue to be the principal source of supply supplemented by a fair volume from the Fort Myers and Everglades crops.

Spring (Fla.) Late plantings in the Pompano section which will provide supplies during the spring season are expected to overcome most of the shock sustained by the early February storm. In the important Plant City area, most of the acreage has been set, but these young plantings are reported to be making relatively slow progress at this time. Some transplanting is in progress at Webster and seed beds in the North Florida sections are reported to be in fair to good condition.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: Winter (Texas, Fla.) In the important Dade County section of Florida, harvesting is now near its peak level. Indications are that the yields on this crop will be slightly below the excellent yields obtained last season. Younger plantings were badly whipped by the storm of early February and considerable blight has developed. Yields on these later plantings will be reduced considerably. Digging is well over the peak in the Fort Myers section, but light harvesting will continue during the remainder of the month.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex.) In the important Hastings section of Florida, planting was largely completed by late January. Stages of growth range from blooming to just coming up. Recent weather conditions have been favorable with rather mild temperatures and ample moisture. In South Florida, crops in the Everglades, Indiantown, and Hillsborough County sections are making fair to good progress. Occasionally, poorly drained fields suffered some damage from heavy rains in early February. In Texas, temperatures have been favorable for crops in all sections of the early spring potato area and crops that have had sufficient irrigation are in good condition. There is considerable territory, however, that has been short of water for some time, and the Raymondville acreage has had very little water since the crop was planted. Yield prospects for the area as a whole are only fairly good and development has been retarded despite the favorable growing weather.

Late Spring: (Calif., La., Miss., Ala., Ga., S. Car., Tex., Okla., Ark., Tenn., N. Car.) Planting in South Carolina has been delayed because of excessive wet weather. Only about 40 percent of the crop has been planted in the important Charleston area where normally about 75 percent of the crop is planted by mid-February. In Beaufort County approximately 25 percent of the crop has been planted. In other areas of the State, planting is just getting started. Planting in North Carolina will be virtually completed by the end of February if weather conditions permit. In general, planting this year is later than normal. In Currituck County 75 percent of the crop was in the ground by mid-February while in other areas, planting was just getting underway. Wet soils have delayed planting to some extent in Pasquotank and Camden Counties, while in other areas there appears to be still some indecision on the part of growers in regard to the 1952 crop.

SPINACH: Winter (Tex., La., Calif., Miss.) Production in Texas during the remainder of the season will be restricted to the Winter Garden and Eagle Pass irrigated districts, which have provided all of the shipments during the past two weeks. Dry-land plantings in the Coastal Bend and Raymondville sections deteriorated because of lack of moisture and practically all of the acreage has been abandoned. There is considerable acreage in the Eagle Pass section for March harvest and both the Winter Garden and Eagle Pass areas expect to harvest actively the balance of February.

SQUASH: Winter (Florida) The storm in early February materially damaged the crop in the Pompano and Dade County sections and the volume from the State during the first half of the month was considerably below the good volume which moved during the last half of January. Indications are that this reduction in volume will continue during most of the remainder of February. Younger plantings are generally reported to be making good progress and with favorable weather, volume during March should show some improvement. The Pompano and Dade County sections are the principal sources of supply at this time, but widely scattered plantings in the Fort Myers-Immokalee and West Coast sections are contributing a fair volume.

SQUASH (Continued): Spring (Florida) Planting for spring harvest in the important Plant City area has largely been completed. In the Ocala-McIntosh section of North Florida, planting started in early February and most of the acreage has been seeded at this time.

STRAWBERRIES: Winter (Florida) In the important Plant City-Wauchula-Webster section of Central Florida, the crop reached its peak level of production during the first half of February. Recent weather conditions have generally been favorable for growth, but insects such as nematodes and red spiders are causing the crop to produce lighter yields than earlier anticipated. In the Starke-Lawtey section of North Florida, frosts in early February caused rather extensive damage to the open bloom. Light harvesting continues in progress from this crop, but it will be the latter part of the month or early March before this section gets into full harvest.

Mid-Spring: (13 States) North Carolina's crop was in rather poor condition on February 15. Early freezes in last November came while the plants were still growing and caused considerable damage. The cold weather that has prevailed during subsequent months has not improved the condition of the plants and little sign of growth has been noted as yet. Red Spider infestation appears to be rather heavy throughout the producing area; however, spraying is general, and in the past control measures have been quite effective. Although the crop appears to be in poor condition now, there was no winter bloom to further reduce the vitality of the plants. With favorable weather conditions during the next few weeks the crop may overcome much of the damage sustained during the winter. Growers generally are concerned over the high cost of crates and an anticipated shortage of labor this season.

TOMATOES: Winter (Florida) The winter crop in the South Florida areas was damaged considerably by the storm on February 2 and yield prospects from this crop have been lowered materially. A storm of this nature causes varying degrees of damage depending on the age of the crops, type of land, and drainage. The weather which has prevailed since the storm has not been too favorable for recovery. Heavy dews during the night followed by hot sun during the day have caused considerable leaf damage and made the control of disease more difficult. Growers are now reporting the present condition of the crop at 50 to 75 percent of normal. Good growing weather during the remainder of the season could materially improve these prospects, particularly on younger plantings which have more time for recovery. Movement from the State during the first half of February declined slightly from the good volume shipped during the previous semi-monthly period. Prior to the storm, the indications were that the peak movement would occur during February. A good volume continues in prospect for the remainder of the winter deal, but at somewhat lower levels than was indicated before the storm. Quality should continue to improve as the crops grow out of these storm conditions. The Dade County section is the principal source of supply with some harvesting underway in the Dania-Hallandale and Immokalee sections.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex., Calif.) In Florida, late plantings in the Dade County section which will supply production during the spring months, are expected to make a reasonable recovery with favorable weather. In the Immokalee section, the heavy rains caused some damage to the spring crop with most opinions ranging from 15 to 25 percent. Where the crops are not too far advanced, considerable recovery is possible with favorable growing conditions. The spring crop in the Fort Pierce area is generally reported to be making fair progress. In the Manatee-Ruskin area, the young crops are rather irregular with some growers reported to be having difficulty in getting a stand started. In the

TOMATOES: Early Spring (Continued) Webster-Oxford-Belleview-Ocala area, the cool weather of February 6-8 caused some losses. The crop has been retarded and some replanting has been necessary. Progress of the Lower Valley, Texas, crop was retarded the past two weeks by lack of water for irrigation. This crop has had very mild growing weather all season and some of the earliest plantings are much further advanced than usual for this date. Plants in a few fields started blooming the latter part of January, but it is doubtful if these early blooms will hold a set because of a shortage of water and the brief cool spell around mid-February. The area as a whole has been without a good rain since the crop was planted and the present scarcity of water is Valley-wide. Should moisture conditions improve in the near future a much earlier than usual crop can still be produced. Production from Imperial Valley, California, fields continue at a high level for this season of the year but some decline in production is expected during the next two weeks as growers complete harvest on the early crop of mature fruit. Production in late February probably will be fairly light because of frost damage early in January.

Late Spring: (6 States) Conditions in all late spring areas of Texas have been favorable for seed-bed plantings and for preparation of fields. Setting of plants to cold frames is started. Moisture conditions are fairly favorable over much of the east Texas tomato area, but central (Yoakum) and southern sections (Falfurrias and Ingleside) need moisture badly. Planting in the southern section is already later than usual. Plantings in this area are mostly seeded direct to the fields and are not irrigated. If the present mild temperatures continue in the east Texas area, considerable acreage will be planted direct from hot-beds to the fields.

WATERMELONS: Late Spring (Calif., Fla.) Acreage in Florida ranges from early fields in the blooming stage in South Florida to just planted in North Florida. The cold period of February 6-8 which extended into the edge of the South Florida areas, caused some damage to unprotected fields, but the overall extent of the losses was comparatively light and was confined mostly to burned leaves and general retarding of growth. Some replanting was necessary. The recent rains over the North and Central Florida area should be beneficial for getting the young plantings started. Soil moisture over the entire watermelon area is good to adequate.