



# Commercial Truck Crops

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## TRUCK CROP NEWS (as of January 15, 1944)

Cold weather prevailed in the commercial vegetable areas of California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida during the first half of January. The more hardy vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, spinach, etc., escaped with minor injury while some tender vegetables suffered considerable damage.

The low temperatures in California caused only slight injury to broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, and lettuce, but growth was retarded and the volume of shipments curtailed for a few days. In the Imperial Valley, some damage occurred to the pea and tomato crops which were just being harvested, and to peas which were just ready to harvest. The extent of damage in the Imperial Valley has not been fully determined as yet. There is a possibility that the harvest can be resumed on a portion of the acreage later in the month.

Planting in the southern and coastal California districts was held up in early January by excessive soil moisture but a rather sizable acreage had been planted prior to the rains. Reports indicate that California growers are planning to expand the acreages of most vegetable crops in 1944, with increases for lettuce, onions, potatoes, and melons now in prospect.

Cool weather in Arizona has so delayed the growth and lowered the yields of all growing vegetables that shipments are being slowed and volume reduced.

Texas commercial vegetable areas experienced a cold wave from January 8-15. Temperatures ranged from 27 at the west end of the Rio Grande Valley to as low as 19 in the Austin spinach area. Rainfall minimized the damage in the early part of the period while snows at Austin, San Antonio, Eagle Pass, and in the Coastal Bend tended to reduce the damage during the latter part of the period. Crop growth has been definitely stopped. Harvesting is being delayed, with shipments during the past week limited to supplies in the packing sheds.

Florida's hardy crops were benefited during the first half of January by the recent rains and the cool temperatures but the growth of such crops as beans, tomatoes, eggplant and squash has been retarded. Fields for spring crops are being prepared and seeded in all parts of the State.

ARTICHOKES: Frost occurred in the California artichoke districts during the first half of January, resulting in some bud discoloration in the colder areas. Growth has been slowed and heavy production will not develop in late January.

GREEN LIMA BEANS: In Florida, shipments of lima beans from the early plantings of the winter crop have been very light. It will be February before any increase over the present rate of movement can be expected. The crop in the Fort Pierce section is practically over and supplies for the immediate future will come largely from the Indiantown and Pompano sections.

SNAP BEANS: In Florida, the period of light movement during the first half of January, which was caused by the December frosts, is about over and shipments should show an increase during the latter part of the month. The main crop in the Pompano section has been retarded by the cool weather and yields are lower than expected. The quality is only fair at this time and yields and quality would be greatly benefited by a period of warmer weather. In the Lake Okeechobee section, a very light movement is coming from the small acreage which escaped the December frosts, but it will be around the middle of February before any volume can be expected from this section. A light movement is coming from the Homestead area but no considerable increase in volume is expected from this section until February. Beans are being planted in the Lake Okeechobee, Pompano and Homestead sections but it will be around the middle of February before the Lake Okeechobee section begins general planting for the spring crop.

BEETS: The recent cold weather in Texas was not expected to cause any further damage to beets. Tops were badly discolored and growth retarded during the mid-December cold spell. Progress of crops in the Coastal Bend will be slow until favorable growing weather develops; movement from this area is about one-fourth that of this date last year. Shipments for the season from all areas are ahead of last year, with all the increase coming from the Lower Valley. The recent cold weather delayed the Valley crops, but prospective tonnage from this section is not expected to be materially reduced.

BROCCOLI: Peak loadings of California broccoli will continue for another two weeks, with San Jose, Castroville, and Santa Maria developing most of the current supply. Cold weather has slowed growth but has not caused any appreciable crop damage. Plantings in the Imperial Valley should be ready for harvest early in February, at which time coastal supplies will be lighter. Some new fields of broccoli in the Salt River Valley of Arizona are now coming into production. Shipments, however, are expected to be maintained at approximately the present rate. Most of the broccoli continues to move in mixed cars. Quality continues to be unusually good.

CABBAGE: In Florida, weather has been very favorable for the growth of cabbage, and good yields are expected. Cutting has started in the main sections of Lake Okeechobee, Manatee, Winter Garden, Sanford and Hastings. Shipments are showing a gradual increase and by February 1 harvest should become general, with the peak shipments expected from the middle of February to the latter part of March. Heavy frosts occurred in all cabbage areas of Texas, and young cabbage as far south as the lower section of the Rio Grande Valley was damaged. Acreage losses are not expected to be extensive but progress has been retarded, and yield prospects may be lowered somewhat. Cuttings to the middle of January continued to furnish many soft heads. Shipments are still under those of last year but harvest should be active in all areas during the latter part of January.

Movement of cabbage from Arizona has declined somewhat during the past week, but shipments may increase slightly as new fields in the Salt River Valley come into production late this month. Some cabbage at Yuma is also expected to be available

CABBAGE, CONT'D: after February 1. Supplies have been reduced by the continued cold weather, which has prevented the usual size development. Supplies of California cabbage should be more plentiful during late January, and carlots should be available out of the Imperial Valley before the end of the month. At present, carlot supplies are coming mainly from the coastal areas. In southern California, December rains and the resultant wet fields were unfavorable to cabbage plantings, but the cold weather now being experienced is expected to improve the quality.

CARROTS: Loadings in California will continue from the central carrot districts through January; however, harvest is well along on the most desirable shipping acreage and an increase in the percentage of topped carrots is expected. The Blythe and Imperial Valley plantings have made good progress. Shipping has started in the Blythe area, and will get under way in the Imperial Valley late this month. Carrots for spring harvest in the coastal districts are being planted. Indications now point to some slight increase in the heavy producing areas, but the total spring acreage is likely to be reduced. Last spring there were quite a few new carrot growers in the deal, and many of the newer growers are expected to eliminate this crop from their plantings in 1944. Production, however, should be well up toward last year's levels.

Harvest of carrots in the Salt River Valley of Arizona is now active, and movement from Yuma is expected to increase during the second half of the month. Fields are being harvested as rapidly as they develop marketable size, but most of the supplies now available are medium-sized carrots, due to the fact that harvest has been so active that carrots have not reached full maturity. A considerable volume continues to move in mixed cars. In Texas no damage was reported to carrots, but progress of crops already adversely affected by earlier unfavorable conditions will be retarded. Shipments of carrots during the past two-week period were stepped up considerably, but movement for the season is much below what the early heavy plantings promised. Supplies will continue to increase the latter part of January, with all areas expecting improved quality beginning the early part of February.

CAULIFLOWER: Harvest of California cauliflower increased in the coastal districts during early January, mainly because of the rains and warmer weather which brought the crop on quite rapidly. Growth has been slowed by the cold weather, and supplies will be lighter during the latter part of January. In the Salt River Valley of Arizona many of the early fields of cauliflower are about cleaned up, but other acreage is now coming into production. Some increase in movement may be expected during the last half of January, but it is believed peak shipments were reached early this month. Yields of the later fields may be lighter than the yields of the early acreage.

CELERY: Shipments from the California Delta area of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley have continued in fair volume during the past two weeks, but harvest on the late fields should finish in another week. Some surprisingly good quality celery has developed out of these late plantings, although many of the late patches did not make size or length. Harvest is well along in the coastal districts of the Salinas Valley and Santa Maria-Guadalupe. In Chula Vista, harvest is gaining headway and a fair volume may be expected by the 1st of February. Quality is excellent in the early fields and the later plantings are making fine progress.

Condition of Florida celery in the Sanford, Manatee and Lake Okeechobee sections is generally good. Growing conditions have been favorable and good yields are expected. Shipping is under way in all sections and volume should show a gradual increase during the next two weeks.

CUCUMBERS: In Florida, a few cucumbers are now being harvested in the Pompano area but this movement will be very light as the greater part of the crop intended for winter harvest was severely damaged by the December frosts. Planting of the early spring trough acreage is being made in the Wauchula and Lake and Sumter county areas. Most of this acreage will be planted by February 1.

EGGPLANT: A very small volume of Florida eggplant is being harvested from the fall plantings in the Winter Garden, Manatee and Fort Myers sections, but this crop is practically over. The crop in the Pompano section is in fair condition and this acreage will furnish the main supplies during the remainder of the winter season.

ESCAROLE: Condition of the Florida escarole crop is good, and available supplies are heavy. Cutting has slowed down during the past week, however, because of unfavorable market conditions. Supplies are now available in the main sections of Winter Garden, Sanford, Manatee and Lake Okeechobee.

KALE: Rains in Virginia have revived the kale crop from its cold weather injury. Movement is rapid and demand is exceptionally good.

LETTUCE: In the California Imperial Valley, lettuce harvest has been slowed by wet fields and more recently by frosts which have prevented early morning cutting. Most lettuce now available requires considerable trimming to remove discolored wrapper leaves. The effect of recent frost will probably show in reduced sizes in another week or ten days. Solidity, however, will improve. In the spring lettuce districts of California, planting is well along and all indications now point to a sizeable increase in acreage. Thinning will be general in late January and early February. Rains in December were mostly beneficial to lettuce in the spring districts. Although heavy planting has not been possible during the past three weeks because of wet fields, with clear weather planting can be resumed this week in most districts.

Movement of lettuce from Phoenix, Arizona is expected to continue at a moderate rate throughout January, and harvest at Yuma will also continue at the current rate until about February 1. Supplies will decline at Yuma after February 1 but will increase again about mid-February. In Florida, Boston lettuce is moving from the Sanford and Manatee sections. Iceberg is available in the Ruskin-Manatee area, the Lake Okeechobee section and from small plantings in other sections. Quality is reported as being very good.

all  
ONIONS: In Texas areas onions apparently have escaped freeze damage but crops are making slow growth and are in poor condition in many areas. The Raymondville crops are probably the most advanced as a whole - over 50 percent of the acreage in this district has plants suitable for marketing as green onions. Considerable quantities are still moving as green onions but a large acreage will be held to maturity. Irrigated crops in Laredo and the Winter Garden were set to the fields at a much later date than usual, and growth of the plants was very slow when the recent cold spell occurred. A large part of the Coastal Bend crop is beginning to show the effects of excessive moisture and poor growing weather. No acreage losses have been reported in this section, but continued unfavorable weather may result in low yields and poor quality onions. Field work in all North Texas onion areas has been stopped for the past ten days on account of bad weather. Active transplanting will not be started until the last week in January or early February. Plants already set to the fields in the Austin and Taylor districts were not damaged by the recent cold wave.

In California, sizeable increases in the plantings of Bermuda and Intermediate crop onions have been made. Although it is too early to predict crop yields, the acreage generally is in good condition, and most plantings have a good start toward favorable yields.

GREEN PEAS: In California, Imperial Valley spring peas suffered some frost damage, ranging from complete loss of the present crop in the lower areas to slight pod discoloration in the better protected growing districts. Production during the next two weeks will be limited, and heavy production will be delayed until about the middle of February. The green pea crop in the Lake Okeechobee section of Florida is now moving and there should be a slight increase over the present volume during the next two weeks. Volume will be light because of a reduced acreage.

GREEN PEPPERS: The fall crop in the Florida Winter Garden and Manatee sections is about finished. In the Pompano section, where the crop got off to a slow start, volume is now showing an increase and the quality is reported to be very good. An increase in movement should be expected from this section. Seed beds for the spring crop in the central counties are being planted.

COMMERCIAL EARLY  
IRISH POTATOES: In the Lake Okeechobee section of Florida, digging is nearing its peak, but shipments should continue until the first part of February. The crop in the Ft. Myers section is reported to be making good progress. In Dade county, conditions have been very unfavorable and many fields are in poor condition because of blight. With this disease attacking the crop so early in the season, indications are that the crop will be greatly reduced. Weather conditions will determine the extent to which the disease can be controlled. In the Hastings section, planting is under way, with the acreage around Federal Point practically all planted. In the Texas Lower Valley, only slight lowering of yields of the winter potato crop may be expected as a result of the Jan. 8-15 cold spell. Maturity of this crop was well advanced and harvest was getting under way when the cold struck. Planting of the Lower Valley early spring crop was well along but germination of seed was slow. Only a few fields were subjected to frost damage, all of which will come out again. Continued delay in seed germination, however, may result in poor stands.

Planting in the Kern county area of California has been going ahead rapidly during January. Approximately one half of the acreage is now planted, and the bulk of the remainder will be seeded during the next three weeks. Heavy frost in this area did little damage to the potato crop, with but few of the early plantings up sufficiently to show through the rows. There is a rather sizeable expansion indicated for the Kern county area this spring, and it is likely that a record acreage will be planted. Some increase in acreage is also indicated for early potatoes in the southern districts of the State, where planting will start in a couple of weeks.

SPINACH: In Texas, all important spinach areas were subjected to temperatures of 19-23 degrees during the cold wave of January 8-15. Losses during the early part of the period were negligible, and damage during the latter part of the week was not expected to be serious because of snowfall that covered crops over a large part of the area. Crops in the Austin area, where almost seven inches of snow fell, are expected to recover fully and young spinach to show a material improvement over earlier prospects. Temperatures were lower in this than in any other spinach area. Harvesting activities were stopped in all districts. Field work was resumed in the Lower Valley (Raymondville) section January 14-15 and several cars were shipped, but the important Eagle Pass and Winter Garden sections are not expected to resume active harvest before the middle of the week of January 16. The Coastal Bend district is still too wet but some fields will be suitable for harvest to start about the time other areas get started. Shipments should be active from all sections the last week in the month.

from Virginia

Movement of spinach is very light and will continue so until the end of March. There are a few good crops from which some cuttings will be made - probably not over 200 acres until spring. Spinach for spring cutting was planted very late and in dry soil. Some has not germinated yet and freezes injured what young stuff was up.

SPINACH, CONT'D: After the spring season opens, around the last of March, movement from carry-over spinach is expected to be about normal until the last week of April. Late fall-planted spinach will be ready by that time but due to its poor condition, movement from these plantings is expected to be light. There probably will be some February plantings to come on the market during the first 10 days in May.

SQUASH: Supplies of Florida squash are very light at this time. Most of the crop was killed by the December frosts and no material increase in shipments is expected until new plantings come in.

STRAWBERRIES: In Florida, a light movement of strawberries is now coming from the Plant City area but the cool, cloudy weather of the past two weeks has retarded the progress of the crop. Plants are generally in good condition and with the present satisfactory supply of moisture, good yields are expected. Volume will be light on account of the small acreage.

TOMATOES: The Florida fall crop in the Ft. Pierce and Manatee sections is practically over. A light movement can be expected from the State until the main winter crop comes into production in February. The production during this interval will come from scattered plantings along the lower East Coast, Immokalee section, and the windup of the fall crop in the Manatee and Ft. Myers sections. The winter acreage in Dade, Broward and Collier counties has been making only fair progress, owing to the cool weather. Transplanting is about completed. It is not expected that any shipments of consequence will be made from this acreage until around February 15. Seeding has been done for most of the spring crop in the Indian River and Manatee sections and in the central counties seed beds are now being planted.

The recent cold wave in Texas reached into all early spring (Lower Valley) tomato districts, with temperatures as low as 27 and heavy frosts in the important producing sections. Planting of this crop was well along and a large acreage was up to a good stand. Losses were reported and are expected to be fairly general over the area, but more extensive in the west end of the Valley. Replanting will depend upon whether seed is available. In California, Imperial Valley plantings were damaged by frost early last week. Open plantings were hard hit, but where the acreage was covered with brush and paper, only the outside fruit was damaged. Production will be back to about normal in two or three weeks.

WATERMELONS: Planting of Florida watermelons has started in the Leesburg area. If growers carry out their intentions, there will be an increase in the acreage of this crop in Florida this year over that planted last year. Increases will be made in all sections with the greatest expansion being made in the Live Oak and west Florida sections.