



Commercial Truck Crops

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COMMERCIAL TRUCK CROPS FOR FRESH MARKET TRUCK CROP NEWS -- DECEMBER 15, 1951

There was a wide variation in growing conditions of vegetables in commercial areas at mid-December, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today. Freezing temperatures prevailed in California and Texas while conditions were good in Arizona and generally favorable in Florida.

In Florida, soil moisture supplies ranged from adequate in central and northern areas to deficient in South Florida. Growing conditions were generally favorable despite scattered light frosts as far south as Homestead on the morning of December 13. Early reports indicate that damage was very light. Only the most tender crops were damaged. During the first half of December snap beans and tomatoes were at peak harvest but eggplant and peppers continued in light supply. Harvesting of celery became active and supplies of other hardy vegetables will increase as the month progresses. Planting of winter crops continues in south Florida and preparation of land for spring crops is under way in central and northern areas.

During the first half of December, commercial vegetables in Texas continued to make good progress. Tender crops which had survived the early November cold spell continued to improve. Hardy type crops developed satisfactorily, particularly in the non-irrigated areas. Production of all vegetables has been later than usual and volume harvest is not expected until early January. A light harvest of cabbage, carrots and spinach began in the Lower Valley and broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, spinach and other greens were moving in fair volume from the Winter Garden, Eagle Pass and Laredo sections. Transplanting of onions in irrigated sections continued and many of the earliest crops started making top growth. Preparation of soil for early spring planting is well advanced in the earliest areas, mainly Lower Valley potato and tomato crops and watermelons in the Falfurrias section. Little damage resulted from the December 16 cold spell, which reached into the Winter Garden and Eagle Pass sections where only hardy crops such as cauliflower, lettuce, onions and spinach were growing at the time. Most cauliflower plants were sufficiently advanced to be budding and leaves had been tied. Progress of onions and spinach may be retarded some but no serious losses are expected. Advanced lettuce will require some trimming but young plantings are expected to outgrow any leaf damage. Near freezing temperatures were recorded in the Coastal Bend section where only hardy type vegetables were growing. These are expected to come through with little damage. Except for the extreme west end of the Lower Valley, where plantings are comparatively light, temperatures in the Valley were not low enough to cause any damage.

In Arizona conditions continued to be good for winter vegetables with temperatures moderate to cool and precipitation light. Harvest slackened off somewhat during the second week of December. Lettuce shipments showed a decrease from the preceding week, carrots continued moving in light supply and the volume of cabbage continued - continued -

ARTICHOKES: Winter, 1952 Season (California) Production has been slowed by recent cool weather accompanied by frosts. The trend in production will continue downward during the next two weeks. Quality has been adversely affected by freezing temperatures and most lots show some frost discoloration.

LIMA BEANS: Winter, 1952 Season (Florida) The reduced plantings in the Pompano-Delray section continue to make good progress. A light harvesting has begun but it will be after mid-December before any volume develops. Light supplies are coming from a small acreage in the Fort Pierce section.

SNAP BEANS: Early Fall (8 States) A few snap beans are still available from late plantings in the Coachella Valley of California, but supplies are declining and harvest will be completed during the next two weeks.

Late Fall: (Fla., Tex.) Recent weather in South Florida has been favorable for rapid growth and development of the remaining fall crop. Harvesting in the important Everglades section reached its peak during the first half of December and volume will decline rapidly during the second half of the month. The important Pompano section has reached peak level, but will continue to be the principal source of supplies during the winter months. In Dade County, light harvesting is in progress, but it will be January before the main acreage comes into production. Harvesting of pole beans in Dade County should reach a good volume during the second half of December. The fall pole bean crop in the Manatee-Ruskin section is well over its peak harvest and only a light volume is now available. In Texas, conditions have been favorable for the small acreage that survived the early November freeze, most of which is in the eastern end of the Lower Valley. The very light supplies have been taken by nearby markets.

BEETS: Winter, 1952 Season (Texas) Crops in all sections are in good condition. Light supplies starting the latter part of November in the Winter Garden and the early part of December in the Lower Valley were used mostly for mixed car loadings. Most of the winter acreage is in the Lower Valley where plantings were later than usual and a volume for solid carlots is not expected until the early part of January.

BROCCOLI: Fall (California) Recent cool weather has contributed to a decline in production. Also, the acreage available for harvest has been decreasing. Production will remain at relatively low levels during the next two weeks but an increase could occur if the weather turns warmer.

CABBAGE: Late Fall (Ore., Va., N.C., S.C.) In South Carolina, the fall crop is in fair to good condition. Due to the reduced acreage this fall, there was no well defined peak. Heaviest movement is over, but light supplies are expected to be available until mid-January.

Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) Cabbage supplies continue to be short in California and are coming principally from the Los Angeles area. No supplies are yet available from Imperial Valley but harvest should begin this week. The quantity that will be produced in Imperial during the latter half of December will be limited since recent cool weather has slowed development of heads. In Arizona, a moderate volume of winter cabbage continues to move to market with about a third of it going by truck. Quality is firm. Transplanted and direct seeded crops in Texas have made very good growth, and some of the earliest fields are expected to be in production by late December or early January. Volume produc-

CABBAGE: Winter, 1952 Season (Cont'd.) tion, however, is not expected until mid-January. A small acreage is planned for late season harvest, but most of the Valley acreage was planted for January and February harvest. Supplies from a small acreage in the Winter Garden have been available for the past three weeks but most of this production has been sold to truckers for nearby markets. Seeding and transplanting continues active in the principal producing areas of Florida. Recent weather has been favorable and the crop as a whole is making good progress. Shipments during the first half of December were very light. Some increase is expected during the second half of the month as more acreage matures, but it will be well into January before any substantial volume develops. The present volume is mostly coming from the Everglades and Sanford sections with minor quantities from the Hastings and West Coast areas.

CABBAGE: Early Spring, 1952 Season (La., Miss., Ala., Ga., S.C.) Seed beds in South Carolina are in poor condition as a result of cold weather and diseases. Some beds died out completely and others were damaged by dampening off and mold. Plants left in the beds seem to have passed the danger stage. However, there are not enough plants left in the State to plant a normal acreage and growers will probably buy plants from North Carolina or Virginia to complete their plantings.

CANTALOUPS: Spring, 1952 Season (Calif., Fla.) Growers in Imperial Valley and the Blythe district of California have seeded most of their early covered cantaloups. Plants should begin to emerge late in December.

CARROTS: Fall (10 States) Production in California continues in volume but shipments are expected to decline during the next two weeks. However, there is a sufficient acreage still in the ground to enable volume production to continue through January. Recent frosts have caused some damage to tops and topped shipments are increasing.

Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Ea.) Harvesting of early fields of winter carrots has begun in Imperial Valley of California but the quantity produced to date has been negligible and production during the balance of December is expected to be light. Arizona shipments are moving in light volume with only about half as many cars per day as a year ago. Quality is good and market demand requirements have improved. The Texas Lower Valley loaded its first solid car on December 11. Light shipments are expected to continue through December with volume movement starting around the middle of January. Supplies from the Winter Garden have continued to show a gradual increase. Crops in all sections are in good condition and are expected to furnish supplies for active harvest from mid-January through mid-March.

CAULIFLOWER: Winter, 1952 Season (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) In California, recent low temperatures have slowed growth and production has declined. The fairly heavy production caused by mild weather and warm rains in late November and during the first few days of December brought some fields to harvest stage ahead of schedule and contributed to the present light supply. Production during the next two weeks will be dependent upon temperatures but some increase appears likely. Crops in all areas of Texas have continued to make good progress. Supplies have been available in the Eagle Pass section for the past two weeks and harvest is expected to be fairly active throughout most of January. A light harvest was started in the Winter Garden about mid-December and this area also expects to be in fair volume production throughout most of January.

CAULIFLOWER: Winter Season, 1952 (Cont'd.) Movement to date has been by trucks although supplies have been available in sufficient volume for solid carlots. Crops in the Lower Valley are much later than usual. Condition of the Florida crop is generally good. Transplanting continues active in the Manatee-Ruskin, Sanford-Winter Garden, and Hastings sections. Light harvesting is expected to start in the Manatee-Ruskin and Sanford sections around the 20th of December and harvesting should become fairly active in early January.

CELERY: Late Fall (Calif., N.J.) Peak of the December harvest season for fall celery in California has been passed but volume shipments are still being made from the Stockton, Salinas and Santa Maria-Oceano districts. Many growers have finished operations for the season and, although volume production will continue for the balance of December, shipments are expected to decrease. Recent freezing temperatures caused some damage in the colder locations and shippers have stripped outer leaves.

Winter, 1952 Season (Fla., Calif., Ariz.) The winter crop in Florida is generally making good progress and the recent cool weather has been beneficial. Harvesting increased materially during the first half of December with most of the production during this period coming from Zellwood. Light harvesting continues in the Everglades. Shipments will continue to increase as the month progresses, but it will be after the Christmas Holidays before harvesting will become general in all sections. In California, there has been an increase in the production of winter celery in all Southern California districts during the past two weeks but the deal has not yet reached volume stage. Production is expected to expand during the balance of the month, and the deal should be in heavy production by January 1. Recent frosts in Southern California did not cause any damage to this crop. Rains during the past two weeks were of great benefit to the crop and prospects continue excellent.

Spring: (Fla., Calif.) In California the early acreage of spring celery has been set in the Venice section of Los Angeles County. Planting will not be completed in that area until early March.

SWEET CORN: Fall and Winter Season (Fla.) Most of the early fall acreage in the important Everglades section has been harvested. However, this section will continue to be the source of light/during the remainder of December and January if weather conditions are favorable. The winter crops in the Fort Myers, Pompano-Delray, and Dade County sections are in fair to good condition. Light harvesting is in progress at Fort Myers and this acreage will be one of the principal sources of supplies during late December and January. Harvesting in Dade County is in progress from a few early fields but it will be January before the main acreage in this section comes into production. Planting of an increased acreage in the Pompano-Delray section is nearing completion.

CUCUMBERS: Late Fall (Fla.) Shipments during the first half of December have continued at about the same level as they were during the last half of November. Yields were reduced considerably by the cold of November 17 to 22. Since that time a fair degree of recovery has been made on the crops which were not too severely damaged. Harvesting is practically finished in the Wauchula and Manatee-Ruskin sections. The Fort Myers-Immokalee area will continue to be the principal source of supply during the second half of December, supplemented by light supplies from the Fort Pierce and Pompano sections. Very little production is expected from the small acreage at Indiantown until after the Christmas Holidays.

EGGPLANT: Fall (Fla., Tex.) Acreage in the important Fort Myers and Pompano sections of South Florida continues to make fair to good progress. The small acreage in the Manatee-Wauchula area is in poor to fair condition while the limited acreage in the Everglades is generally making good progress. Harvesting during the first half of December has shown a gradual increase over the previous two-week period and volume during the second half of the month should show a further increase, with the bulk of the production coming from the Fort Myers and Pompano sections. A light harvest has continued in the Lower Valley of Texas and will continue throughout December, if favorable weather prevails.

ESCAROLE: Winter, 1952 Season (Fla.) While the escarole and chicory crops have made fair to good progress, the recent warm weather, accompanied by heavy fog, has caused some deterioration, necessitating closer trimming. These crops should benefit by the cooler weather. Volume has increased materially during the past two weeks and should continue at a good level unless some very adverse weather conditions develop. Supplies are coming from all of the main winter producing areas which includes the Everglades, Zellwood-Sanford-Oviedo, and Manatee-Ruskin.

LETTUCE: Winter, 1952 Season (Ariz., Calif., Fla., Tex.) In Arizona, the volume at Phoenix is declining from the peak of movement reached on December 4. Supplies from the Salt River Valley will probably continue to taper off until the close of the winter deal or about the end of January. Shipments from Yuma are expected to hold at a fairly uniform level throughout the season. Quality of the Arizona crop has been excellent. In California, recent cool weather in the Desert areas has slowed growth and development of lettuce to the point that the volume being harvested has declined during the past week instead of increasing as it normally does at this season. There has been no frost in Imperial Valley but minimum temperatures have been in the 40s and maximums between 60 and 65 with some days falling to reach 60. While heavier production is in prospect during the next two weeks, the extent and rapidity of this increase will be dependent upon prevailing temperatures. The Florida crop has made fair to good progress, although some production was lost due to unseasonably high temperatures. Light harvesting of Boston and Romaine is in progress in the Central Florida and Everglades sections and these areas will continue to be the principal sources of supplies during the winter months. Very light harvesting of Iceberg is in progress,

LETTUCE: Winter, 1952 Season (Cont'd.) but it will be after the Christmas Holidays before harvesting becomes general. In Texas, supplies continue to be confined to production in the Winter Garden and Laredo sections. Carlot shipments from these areas have been light, but movement by truck has been active. Conditions in all sections have been favorable for growing crops, and most areas escaped damage from the cold spell over the weekend of the 16th.

ONIONS: Early Spring, 1952 Season (Tex.) Good progress in transplanting was made in the irrigated sections, and conditions were favorable for completing the seeding of non-irrigated acreages. Early-planted crops in all areas have started making top growth, and moisture reserves in the non-irrigated sections are sufficient to maintain good growth for some time. The cold spell over the week-end of the 16th is not expected to cause any serious delay in the crop.

GREEN PEPPERS: Fall (Va., Fla., Tex.) Supplies from the fall acreage in Florida showed some increase during the first half of December and will show a further increase during the second half of the month. However, the total volume will continue to be very light during this period. Harvesting is from plantings which survived the heavy October rains and it will be late January before volume production is expected from plantings made after the middle of October. Current supplies are mostly coming from the Fort Myers and Pompano sections with a very light volume from the Wauchula and Manatee sections. Harvest in the Lower Valley of Texas continued active during the first half of December. Young plantings in this area that were hurt by the early-November cold weather made very good recovery and will furnish some production during the rest of December. Most areas of the Lower Valley escaped damage from the week-end cold spell of December 16th.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: Winter, 1952 Season (Tex., Fla.) In the Texas Lower Valley, a light harvest of potatoes is expected to start soon after mid-December but most of the plantings were for January and early February harvest. Conditions have been favorable for this crop. The crop in the Everglades of Florida is generally making good progress. It is probable that a small acreage will be dug prior to the Christmas Holidays, but most of this crop will be dug during January. The crop in the Fort Myers section is making fair to good progress. In Dade County, the oldest plantings are about a foot high. Rainfall has been very light in this section and a good rain would be beneficial.

SPINACH: Winter, 1952 Season (Tex., La., Calif.) Movement of Texas spinach is under way from all growing sections, although most of the shipments to date have been from the Winter Garden section. Carlot loading has started in the Coastal Bend and Raymondville sections. However, the Coastal Bend does not expect volume production until the early part of January and a large part of the Raymondville tonnage is expected to be loaded in mixed cars. Supplies from the Eagle Pass section are not expected to be heavy until the latter part of December. Most of the early harvested fields in the Winter Garden are expected to furnish a second cutting and this area is expected to be in full production during January and February. Low temperatures in the Eagle Pass and parts of the Winter Garden sections over the weekend of December 16th caused some delay in plant growth.

SQUASH: Fall (Fla.) Supplies increased rapidly during the first half of December as the heavy plantings made after the mid-October rains came into production. Weather and growing conditions in the South Florida areas have been favorable and a continued good supply is indicated with the Pompano, Dade County, and Fort Myers-Immokalee sections being the principal sources of supply.

STRAWBERRIES: Winter, 1952 Season (Fla.) The winter strawberry crop in the Plant City, Wauchula, Webster, and Starke-Lawtey sections is in fair to good condition, although berries have been maturing slowly. Very light harvesting is now in progress and growers generally report a good bloom. Fairly active harvesting is expected to be under way by early January.

TOMATOES: Early Fall (Calif.) Production is currently restricted to fields in favored locations in San Diego County and a few other warm coastal sections in Southern California. Recent frosts caused considerable loss and movement is light. The deal is expected to end during the next two weeks.

Late Fall: (Tex., Fla.) In Texas, a light harvest is expected to continue in the Lower Valley for the next two weeks, with most of the production being sold to truckers. The cold spell over the weekend of December 16th will probably finish the Laredo crop for fresh markets, and most of the remaining production will be utilized by canning plants. Florida shipments increased materially during the first half of December and a continued good volume is expected during the remainder of the month. Harvesting from the earliest plantings in the Fort Pierce and Immokalee sections is practically over. While these early plantings constitute the bulk of the acreage in these sections, there is a substantial acreage of younger plantings which will continue to produce well into January. In the Manatee-Ruskin section, the crop is reported to be in generally fair condition, and has made some recovery from the damage caused by the cold winds of late November. The recent foggy weather has made it difficult for growers to control disease and yields are much below normal. Active harvesting will continue well into January.

Winter, 1952 Season: (Fla.) A light harvest has started in Dade County, and, while a fair volume is expected to develop during the latter half of the month, it will be mid-January before this deal gets well under way. Crops in this area could use a good rain, otherwise progress and conditions are favorable. In the Dania-Hallandale section, transplanting is well advanced and about three-fourths of the acreage has been set to date. Plants have been plentiful and conditions good for transplanting. A small early acreage will start harvesting in January. Transplanting has started in the Trail section of Collier County.

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to be light. Cauliflower has started moving.

Weather in California during the first half of December was not favorable for vegetable crops. Heavy rains, while beneficial, caused delays in harvesting of late fall celery and carrots. Heavy frosts, occurring frequently in central and northern areas of the States since December 7, caused minor damage to mature celery and artichokes. Freezing temperatures on December 8 and 9 in southern coastal sections caused considerable damage to tender crops, particularly tomatoes. Growth of celery and other hardy crops was slowed. In the desert areas, temperatures were cool and development of crops retarded. Production of vegetables is relatively light in California at this time. The over-all production will not show much increase during the latter half of December. The upward trend in winter lettuce production will be offset by a decline in the volume of fall celery. Planting of spring crops has begun in a small way but it will be January before seeding becomes active.

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