



# Commercial Truck Crops

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

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics reported today that winter vegetable crops made good progress on the South Atlantic and Gulf Coasts during the first half of January but on the Pacific Coast production was restricted by frosts and heavy rains. Rainfall was light in Florida and Texas but heaviest vegetable producing areas are irrigated.

In South Carolina the weather was unseasonably warm for the last ten days of the period. Good growing conditions prevailed in most areas but high-land fields were showing a lack of moisture. Planting of beets and lettuce is underway and planting of potatoes is expected to begin by the end of January. Temperatures in Florida were mild except for short periods, January 7-8 and January 11. Frosts occurred in northern and central areas but very few tender vegetables were growing in those areas at that time. Rainfall was light during the first half of the month but most commercial vegetables are irrigated. However, crops in the extreme southern part of the State are beginning to show the effects of insufficient moisture. The warm weather has caused rapid growth of crops and total volume of shipments showed an increase over the volume shipped during the last half of December. Cooler weather is desirable for the hardy crops of cabbage, celery, cauliflower and leaf crops. Planting in Florida for spring harvest continues.

In Texas, growth of crops on irrigated land was stimulated by favorable temperatures. Harvest of hardy crops increased but volume of shipments is still below the usual volume at this time of year. Conditions were favorable for field work. In the Lower Valley, planting of early spring potatoes and tomatoes is practically completed and planting of other crops for spring harvest has begun. In non-irrigated areas progress of crops was retarded by lack of moisture. Dry land onions have stopped growing and an infestation of thrips is becoming general in the Coastal Bend area. Planting of crops in North Texas is being held up or delayed until moisture conditions improve.

Weather conditions were favorable for vegetables in Arizona. Rainfall was light in the commercial truck crop areas but irrigation storage supplies were improved by heavier rainfall over the mountain water sheds. The Yuma district is supplying most of the vegetable shipments from Arizona this month.

In California temperatures during the first half of January continued at low levels in most vegetable producing areas and restricted production. Frosts were common in all areas during the first week in January. Heavy rains which began on January 6, have delayed harvest of late fall and winter crops in Central and Northern

California. It has been impossible for growers to prepare ground or seed crops except in the southern San Joaquin Valley and the desert areas where rainfall has been light. Planting of spring crops is being delayed as a result. Recent heavy rains caused minor damage to mature vegetables in the San Francisco Bay area and many fields were waterlogged.

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A late report from California dated January 18, regarding heavy rains January 17-18 is as follows:

SANTA MARIA RIVER OVERFLOWED, FLOODING AND DAMAGING CAULIFLOWER, BROCCOLI, AND STRAWBERRIES ON LOW GROUND. EXTENT OF DAMAGE UNDETERMINED. HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING IN LOS ANGELES AREA CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO VEGETABLE CROPS BUT NOT POSSIBLE TO APPRAISE NOW. EARLY VENICE CELERY UNDER WATER AND SOME CELERY FLOODED AT CHULA VISTA. NO FURTHER DAMAGE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREAS BUT WET FIELDS CONTINUING TO RESTRICT ACTIVITY. -----

The following information by crops covers the period of January 1 to 15 and does not include the damage given in this report of January 18.

**ARTICHOKES:** Winter (Calif.) Production is continuing at moderate levels. No increase can be expected during the next two weeks and supplies will continue to show frost damage during this period.

**LIMA BEANS:** Winter (Fla.) The crop in the Pompano-Delray section is in fair to good condition. Current supplies are rather light but should continue to show some increase during the next few weeks. A small volume is available from Fort Pierce.

**SNAP BEANS:** Winter (Fla.) The crop in South Florida is generally in fair to good condition. Lack of rainfall has affected yield prospects in some localities, but the overall prospects are for continued good volume. The important Pompano section will continue to be the major source of supplies during the remainder of the winter period. Harvesting is active in the Dade County section which is the second most important producing area of mid-winter beans. A light volume continues to move from the Everglades where plantings for winter harvest are comparatively light. The pole bean crop in Dade County continues in active harvest. Current yields are reported to be slightly lower than those obtained from earlier plantings, but quality continues to be good.

**BEETS:** Winter (Texas) Crops have continued to make good growth. Although most of the present production is suitable for bunched stock, some has been harvested as "topped" beets for packaging. Supplies continue to show a gradual increase and most areas are expected to have production through the middle of March.

**BROCCOLI:** Fall (Calif.) Production is being restricted by heavy rains but the volume available for harvest is declining. Supplies from Central California will remain light during the next two weeks as growers finish harvesting the remaining fall fields.

#### Spring (Calif.)

in Imperial Valley a limited volume is being harvested but production is being restricted by cool weather accompanied by morning frosts. As increasing acreage becomes available for harvest during the next two weeks a somewhat heavier production is expected. Earliest spring fields in the Central Coast area and the San Joaquin Valley will not be available for harvest until February. Due to the effects of cool weather and frosts throughout December and early January it appears likely that spring production in Central California will reach volume at a later date than normal.

**CABBAGE:** Winter (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) Production in California's Imperial Valley remains light due to the effects of subnormal temperatures. A limited amount of cabbage for local market and mixed cars is being produced in San Diego County, the Los Angeles area and at Oxnard. Some increase in supplies may occur in Imperial Valley during the next two weeks but it is not likely that the South Coastal districts will show any increase until February. The present excellent markets are tending to restrict production as growers are sacrificing tonnage and harvesting fields on the young side. Although shipments in Texas have been stepped up considerably, they have not reached the volume expected. Crops in all irrigated sections have continued to make good progress but growth in the Coastal Bend has been retarded by dry weather during the past several weeks. Shipments from the Lower Valley are expected to show a substantial increase starting the second half of January and continuing through most of March. A light harvest is started in the Coastal Bend, but tonnage for active harvest will not be available unless crops improve materially. Cooler weather is needed for quality to hold up. Continued warm weather is forcing rapid growth of the Florida crop. Crops are in good to excellent condition but cooler weather would be beneficial. Movement from the State

**CABBAGE:** Winter (Cont'd.) continues to show an increase, but is still relatively light. Harvesting should become fairly general during the second half of the month, but it will be February before cutting becomes heavy.

Early Spring: (5 States) Planting of the spring crop in South Carolina is nearing completion. Due to the loss of many seed beds, it was necessary for some growers to buy plants. Many of the plants were small and damaged by cold which resulted in irregular stands. As a whole, however, the spring crop is in fair condition.

**CARROTS:** Fall (10 States) In California, fall harvest of bunched carrots at Salinas and in the Santa Maria area is over for all practical purposes, but harvesting of topped carrots in both these districts will continue during the next two weeks. Harvesting of bunched carrots will be resumed at Huron in the San Joaquin Valley as soon as fields have dried out enough to allow digging but this deal will provide only a limited volume during the next two weeks.

Winter: (Calif., Ariz., Tex., La.) In California harvesting is becoming increasingly active in the Imperial Valley and on the limited acreage in Coachella Valley. Production in both these districts should continue to increase but will probably not go much above present levels during the next two weeks. In Arizona, light shipments are moving from both Yuma and Phoenix. Weather conditions have been favorable for growth. In Texas, growing conditions have continued favorable in all irrigated sections and harvest in the Lower Valley, Winter Garden, and Laredo sections was becoming quite active by the middle of the month. Supplies from these irrigated sections will be available in good volume for the next two months and the Lower Valley now has some acreage for April harvest. The small acreage in the Coastal Bend is needing rain badly and production will be light unless rains occur soon.

**CAULIFLOWER:** Winter (Calif., Ariz., Tex., Fla.) A rise in temperatures in California caused an increase in production in the Santa Maria area and resulted in a sharp jump in Central California shipments. Production can continue at about present levels for the next two weeks if temperatures remain favorable. In the San Francisco Bay area harvest is being restricted due to heavy rains and wet fields but given drying weather, an increase in volume can be expected. Some cauliflower ground has been flooded but no serious loss should occur unless further rains keep fields in a waterlogged condition. Production in the Los Angeles area is relatively light and supplies are being used locally. In Texas, harvest has been active in the Eagle Pass and Winter Garden sections since mid-December. Peak harvest was reached during the first half of January, but supplies from both sections are expected to continue in fairly good volume into the early part of February. The small acreage in the Lower Valley is being harvested for mixed car loadings. Quality has been exceptionally good. Condition of the Florida crop is generally good. Continued warm weather has caused rapid growth but cooler weather would be beneficial. Harvesting is now active in the Manatee-Ruskin and Sanford-Winter Garden sections. The small acreage in the Hastings section is in fair to good condition but very little harvesting is expected before February.

Spring: (Calif., Ore.) Due to cold weather through most of December and early January spring fields in California have been retarded and, unless temperatures during the next two weeks are more favorable, production during the first half of February may be quite light. Excessive moisture in fields in the San Francisco Bay area can adversely affect the crop.

**CELERY:** Late-Fall, 1951 Season (Calif., N.J.) In California, fall celery is still being harvested in the Santa Maria-Oceano and the Delta areas and these districts should continue to furnish a fair carlot volume during the next two weeks. Most of this celery shows at least some frost damage and requires stripping of outer leaves in order to make grade.

Winter (Fla., Calif., Ariz.) The continued warm weather in Florida has forced rapid growth and hastened maturity in all sections. Cooler weather would benefit quality and improve sizes. The rate of harvest increased materially during the first half of the month and volume from the State should continue to show a further increase as more acreage reaches the harvesting stage. Light setting for spring harvest continues. Production of winter celery continues heavy in Southern California with most of the rail shipments originating from Chula Vista. The crop at Chula Vista is in excellent shape and has received considerable benefit from well spaced rains throughout the fall and winter. Quality is excellent. There has been no frost damage and growers are cutting out heavy yields of well sized celery. In Orange County frosts during December and early January damaged mature celery and retarded young celery in the colder locations. Only a limited amount from this district is moving into carlot channels and most of it is being sold in the Los Angeles market. Some excellent quality is available at Oxnard. In the southern San Joaquin Valley cold weather has retarded development. Some frost damage is apparent in all fields, and no significant volume will move during the next two weeks.

**SWEET CORN:** Winter (Fla.) The continued warm weather has been very favorable for plantings of winter corn. Rainfall has been extremely light in the winter corn growing areas and, while a large portion of this acreage is under some type of irrigation, a good rain would greatly improve yield prospects. Harvesting was light and erratic during the first half of January, but the volume during the second half of the month should improve as more mid-winter acreage comes into production. Supplies now coming from the Pompano-Delray, Dade County, Fort Myers, and Everglades sections will continue throughout the winter. Planting is about over in the Pompano and Fort Myers sections and almost completed in Dade County except for a small acreage which may be planted after early fields of potatoes are harvested. Active planting is now underway in the Everglades and will continue during the remainder of January and in February.

**CUCUMBERS:** Winter (Fla.) Condition ranges from poor to good with the majority of the acreage growing at this time showing prospects for a fair yield. Volume of shipments during the first half of January declined considerably as production from late fall acreage finished up and harvest had started on only a relatively small amount of winter acreage. Production from the winter acreage is expected to show some increase in volume. Imports now coming in from Cuba are being repacked and, as usual during the winter season, will be distributed from Florida shipping points. Current Florida supplies are coming principally from the Immokalee-Fort Myers, Pompano, and Fort Pierce-Indiantown sections. Harvest is expected to commence in Dade County in late January.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex.) In Florida, planting in the South Florida sections has been underway since early January and should be about completed by the latter part of the month. Most of the covered acreage in the Wauchula and Webster sections of Central Florida has been planted and some of this acreage is up to a stand. Most of the open field plantings in this area will be made during the latter part of January and early February.

**EGGPLANT:** Winter (Fla.) In the important Pompano and Fort Myers sections of South Florida crops are making fair to good progress. There has been little or no setback to eggplant in these areas since early fall and continued warm weather has brought about a much heavier production during the early winter than has occurred for several years. Indications are for a continued good volume throughout the winter period. A light volume is available from the Everglades and a limited movement continues from the fall plantings in the Manatee and Wauchula sections.

**ESCAROLE:** Winter (Fla.) The escarole and chicory crops have made good growth due to the continued above normal temperatures. However, the quality and yields are not up to expectations due to the warm weather. Close trimming is necessary, particularly in the Everglades. Plantings have been made to provide a continuous volume throughout the winter period and good supplies continue in prospect. Most of the production is coming from the Everglades supplemented by supplies from the Zellwood-Sanford-Oviedo and Manatee-Ruskin sections.

**LETTUCE:** Winter (Ariz., Calif., Fla., Tex.) In Arizona shipments continue from Yuma. Harvest of the winter crop in the Phoenix area has been completed and the spring deal will not begin for another month. Harvesting of winter lettuce in California continues to be restricted by subnormal temperatures and early morning frosts that continue to plague the Desert areas. Growers are well up on their fields but at any time that temperatures show an appreciable increase, production will expand rapidly. The general quality is excellent but sizes are running small due to cool weather. The weather in Florida has been much too warm for the best development of the crop. Harvesting is active in all of the principal producing areas, but yields are below normal. The Everglades Manatee-Ruskin, Zellwood-Sanford-Winter Garden, and Webster sections are the principal sources of supply. Most of the small late acreage in the McIntosh section has been transplanted. In Texas, good quality lettuce has continued to move from the Lower Valley and Winter Garden sections. Yields, especially in the Lower Valley, have been exceptionally good. Growing conditions have continued favorable for this crop and both areas expect production to be available in fair volume through most of February. Growers in the Winter Garden continue to plant for a late harvest, starting in late March and continuing active through April.

**Early-Spring:** (5 States) Earliest seeded fields of California's spring lettuce crop are up to stand but they have not made good progress due to the retarding effects of cold weather. Field preparation and planting operations in the Central Coast producing districts have been delayed by rains. While it might appear at the present time that the California spring crop will be late, it is still too early to forecast this possibility.

**ONIONS:** Early Spring (Texas) Conditions have continued favorable for plantings of all stages in the irrigated sections and for completing transplanting of some of the late acreages in the Laredo and Winter Garden sections. Early planted crops have made exceptionally good top growth and if no severe setback occurs, there will be considerable acreage for early season harvest. There could be considerable tonnage for late March harvest, but the market outlook will be a factor in the growers' watering and fertilizing plans for development of the earliest plantings. Non-irrigated crops are in need of moisture and thrips was reported to be general in the Coastal Bend section. Crops in the Coastal Bend and Raymondville sections had been sufficiently advanced to furnish some harvest of green onions, but top growth has stopped because of lack of surface moisture. Subsoil moisture was being depleted in some areas. No serious damage has occurred, but moisture is badly needed in all dryland sections.

**ONIONS:** Late Spring (Calif., Ariz., La., Tex., Ga.) In California, planting has been completed in the Desert area and in Kern County. Transplanting is continuing in the Los Angeles, Merced and Stockton areas although operations in the Stockton area have been delayed by wet fields. Transplanting has started in part of the north Texas area. Extensive planting, however, will not get underway until moisture conditions are improved and until after the danger of low temperatures that often occur in late January and early February. Growers are still uncertain of their acreage plans and have been slow in contracting for plants.

**PEPPERS:** Winter (Fla.) Continued warm weather has been favorable for the winter pepper crop in South Florida. While most of this acreage is under irrigation, a good rain would be beneficial. Supplies during the first half of January increased materially over those of the last half of December. During the second half of January there should be a decided improvement in volume with harvesting getting into full swing in the important Pomano section. The crop in the Fort Myers area is in fair condition and is now in its peak harvest. In the Everglades, light harvesting is in progress and this acreage should reach carlot production around the middle of February. If warm weather continues, the South Florida acreage will move its peak volume much earlier than during the past two seasons.

Spring: (Fla.) Transplanting is over half completed in the important Plant City section and is in progress at Webster. Seed beds in the Gainesville area were mostly planted during the early part of January.

**POTATOES:** Winter (Tex., Fla.) Harvest of the small acreage of winter potatoes in Texas started the latter part of December and movement has been fairly active during the past two weeks. Most of the crop is expected to be harvested by the early part of February. In Florida, the winter potato crop in the Dade County and Fort Myers sections has made fair to good progress. Top growth is reported to be good but the prolonged period of dry weather is expected to reduce yields from the high level of recent years. The small acreage in the Everglades has mostly been harvested with above average yields. Digging is now active at Fort Myers and most of this production will move from January 15 to February 15. In Dade County, digging is expected to get underway shortly after the first of February.

Early Spring: (Fla., Tex.) Planting of the spring crop in the Hastings section of Florida, is nearly completed. Land has been prepared for the spring acreage in the LaCrosse area where reduced plantings are in prospect. Most of this crop will be seeded during the second half of January. Conditions in Texas have been favorable for planting the early spring crop in the Lower Valley. Planting started around mid-December and was expected to be finished around the middle of January. Most of the acreage was planted earlier than usual.

**SPINACH:** Winter (Tex., La., Calif.) In Texas, lack of moisture still prevails in the non-irrigated areas but a light movement has continued from the Coastal Bend. Considerable acreage in this area has deteriorated beyond recovery. Some of the Raymondville acreage is under irrigation and movement from this area will continue through February. Crops in the Eagle Pass and Winter Garden sections are furnishing increased supplies and, although solid carlot loadings have shown some increase, the total movement is yet comparatively light. Most growers are harvesting only on orders.

**SQUASH:** Winter (Fla.) The winter crop in the South Florida areas continues to make fair to good progress. Shipments during the first half of January were slightly heavier than during the last half of December and indications are for continued good volume. The Pompano and Dade County sections will be the principal sources of supply supplemented by a light volume from the Fort Myers, Immokalee, and Indiantown sections.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Winter (Fla.) The crop in the Plant City, Wauchula, Webster, and Starke-Lawtey sections is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is now active in the Central Florida sections with very light picking in progress in the Starke-Lawtey section of North Florida. The volume from the State is expected to reach peak levels by the latter part of the month.

**TOMATOES:** Winter (Fla.) The continued warm weather has been favorable for the crop in the South Florida areas, but lack of rainfall is causing some reductions in yield prospects. Active harvesting is now in progress in the important Dade County section and this deal should reach peak volume during February and March. In the Immokalee area, fields for winter harvest are coming into production and this section will be a continuous source of supplies during the winter months.

**Early Spring:** (Fla., Tex., Calif.) In Florida, seeding for spring harvest in the Fort Pierce, Immokalee, and Manatee-Ruskin areas is about completed and young plants are making favorable progress. Transplanting is in progress in the Trail section of Collier County. Seed beds have mostly been planted in the Webster section and seeding to the field is expected to get started in the Oxford-Belleview-Ocala area during the second half of January. Conditions in Texas have been favorable for early plantings of the Lower Valley crop. A good rain would be beneficial and help to replenish the limited water supply in many sections of the Valley. Most plantings, however, have had enough irrigation to carry the crops for some time. With the favorable growing temperatures of the past two weeks, all crops have had a good start. The Lower Valley is expected to have production at an earlier date than usual. Some plantings were up several inches the latter part of December. In California, freezing temperatures and cold weather in the Imperial Valley have damaged and retarded the covered acreage planted for winter harvest. As a result supplies are light and there appears to be no prospect of an increase during the next two weeks.

**WATERMELONS:** Late Spring (Calif., Fla.) Plantings in South Florida were nearly completed by early January and most of this early acreage is up and growing with an occasional field starting to run. In the Central Florida area, most of the plantings will be completed by the latter part of January. A good many early fields are up and no material damage was reported from the cold of January 8 and 11. In North Florida, most fields have been prepared for planting and seeding in this area will be active during the second half of January and early February.