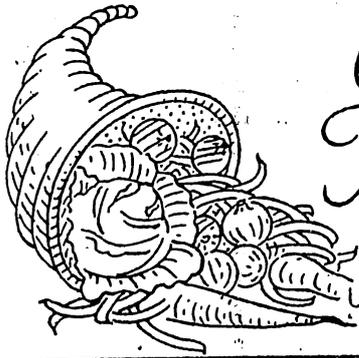


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Commercial Truck Crops

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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TRUCK CROP NEWS (as of March 15, 1944)

Conditions during the first half of March were generally favorable for spring-season truck crops in the more southerly producing areas comprising south Texas, Louisiana, southern Alabama, and Florida. But in the area extending from South Carolina and North Carolina westward to north central Texas, growth was retarded, cultivation impeded, and planting delayed by excessive moisture. Cold and rainy weather in California spring producing areas was unfavorable. In the Pacific Northwest, conditions thus far have been almost ideal. In Arizona, conditions during early March were generally favorable. These spring producing sections will furnish the bulk of vegetable supplies during the second quarter of the year, inasmuch as shipments of winter vegetable crops will be largely completed by April 1.

During the first part of March, weather in the main producing sections of California turned warm and quite favorable. Growers were enabled to work and cultivate their plantings, which had become quite weedy during the February rainy period. In the northern areas, high winds cancelled some of the good effects of the earlier rains. At mid-month, low temperatures were reported in several districts. Reported damage to date is apparently confined largely to asparagus, early potatoes in the San Joaquin Valley, and peas in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Little damage has occurred to the winter vegetables, but frosts in these areas have slowed the development of these crops. The heavy rains in the southern counties have been unfavorable to many of the vegetable plantings. Excessive soil moisture is adversely affecting some broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage in this area. Quite a bit of the acreage seeded just prior to the rains will have to be replanted, because of failure of growers to obtain good stands.

Progress of commercial truck crops in the Texas early districts continued satisfactory. Temperatures were favorable for plant growth and practically all areas received generous rains over the week-end of March 11. Harvesting operations were only slightly retarded. Solid carlot movement of vegetables during the past two weeks continued to be at a higher level than last year. Supplies of most winter crops are still plentiful and quality is generally good. Beets, carrots, and cabbage are available in most districts, but spinach supplies are limited mainly to the irrigated districts of Eagle Pass and the Winter Garden.

Conditions in the Texas early spring districts are favorable. Beans, potatoes and tomatoes are making good progress and plantings of cantaloups, cucumbers and watermelons are being completed in many of the earliest districts. Growing crops have not experienced any set-back and all crops promise earlier-than-usual production.

(Continued on page 9)

ARTICHOKES: Warm weather in California last week brought the crop on quite rapidly and growers were making fairly heavy cuttings when frosts occurred. Little serious damage has resulted, although some bud discoloration may be expected in the crop harvested during the next ten days. Production has also been slowed considerably.

ASPARAGUS: A few crates of South Carolina asparagus have been shipped, but it will be about April 1 before shipping becomes general and about mid-April for peak of movement. Yield per acre is expected to be average or better but a smaller acreage is likely to result in a 7 percent smaller crop. The California harvest gained considerable headway during the warm weather last week. However, the north winds which prevailed during this period lowered the quality. Temperatures over the Delta area varied. In some sections where frost occurred the harvest will be delayed for two or three days. In Washington, some new bearing fields have come into production, but the acreage of asparagus in 1944 will remain the same or decrease slightly. Condition is very good, with average yields expected. Harvest will begin between April 5 and 10. Much of the crop will probably be diverted to quick-freeze and canning plants.

LIMA BEANS: The Florida winter acreage in the Pompano section is generally in poor condition and supplies will continue light until new spring plantings come into bearing. The main spring acreage in the Hawthorne section is well advanced. Most of the crop is up and cultivation has started. Under favorable conditions a light harvest can be expected shortly after the middle of May. Planting of lima beans in South Carolina has been delayed 10 days to 2 weeks by excessive moisture. With favorable weather, planting should become general about March 20.

SNAP BEANS: In Florida, hot, dry weather during February and the first week in March greatly reduced the volume of beans which was expected to come from the winter acreage along the lower East Coast. In the Pompano section where the main acreage is located the volume is declining and will be very light after the first of April. The dry weather damaged the quality to such an extent that much of the crop was not harvested. In the Homestead area, a very disappointing season is nearly over. Abandonment in this section was heavy because of poor quality, disease, and subsequent low returns.

Florida

Planting of the/spring crop is nearing completion. A light volume is beginning to move from the Lake Okeechobee section where the main acreage is located. This section has had very little rain since planting began but the crop as a whole is in fair to good condition. The volume should increase during the latter part of March, with the deal getting into full production about the first of April. In the central and northern counties, planting has been completed and most of the crop is up and growing nicely. Under favorable conditions the earliest plantings around McIntosh should be ready for harvest about April 15. Crops in the Texas Lower Valley - earliest district - were benefited by recent general rains, and are now in good condition. A light harvest is expected the last of March with production in volume in early April. Early crops outside of the Lower Valley also received good rains and are in splendid condition. Later districts have not been able to plant because of wet fields. Planting of the Mississippi snap bean crop will begin during week of March 20. In South Carolina, wet soil has delayed planting some 10 days to 2 weeks. Only a small percentage of the acreage had been planted by March 15. These plantings were in Beaufort and Charleston counties. With favorable weather, planting should become general by the end of this week.

BEETS: Shipments of beets in Texas continued active with total solid carlot movement for the season amounting to 598 cars compared with 345 cars at the same date last year. Shipments of beets to out-of-State canners accounts for some of the increased movement. Supplies of good quality beets will continue to be

BEETS, CONT'D. available in most districts for the next two months, but end-of-season volume may be lighter than usual. In North Carolina, excessive rain in the entire New Hanover County area have been injurious to beets. Much reseeded has been necessary; however, that seed not washed away has germinated normally. The outlook now is that beet harvest may be one to two weeks later than usual, although good weather can change the entire situation in a few days.

BROCCOLI: In California, broccoli is available in most of the coastal areas since the spring crop is now coming into production. Quality is generally good, and a fairly heavy movement may be expected during the remainder of March. Harvesting in the Arizona Salt River Valley is virtually completed. Cuttings during the rest of the month will be limited to meet local needs and for some movement in mixed cars. Shipment in solid carlots may be expected from a small late acreage, to be harvested in April.

CABBAGE: Plantings in southern California are showing the adverse effects of the heavy rains in February. It is quite likely that some of the acreage will be eliminated because of poor crop prospects. Cabbage is still plentiful in most California markets, with the Imperial Valley furnishing the bulk of the present offerings. Harvest should be completed in the Imperial Valley within the next two weeks, at which time the market situation in other districts is expected to improve. Light movement of solid cars of Arizona cabbage is expected to continue throughout March from fields located in the Salt River and Yuma Valleys. It is expected that harvesting at Yuma will be completed soon after April 1. Harvesting of late acreage in the Salt River Valley should get under way about April 15 and continue through May.

Shipments of Texas cabbage the past 15 days averaged 45 cars a day compared with an average of 56 cars a day the previous two-week period. Movement was stimulated the past few days by the improved price levels, but supplies were still in excess of market requirements. Only the best quality cabbage is being cut and some growers are unable to dispose of present production. Crops being held for April and May production are in good condition. The present outlook is for fairly liberal supplies of good cabbage through most of May. The movement of cabbage from Florida has passed its peak but will continue heavy throughout March and during the first half of April. A fair amount of late cabbage will be available in May. The bulk of the crop is in fair to good condition but an unusually large percentage of this crop has been of inferior quality caused by poor seed, insects, and dry hot weather. Low returns have caused much tonnage to be left in the fields.

In Mississippi, growth of plants has been irregular and many fields have poor to fair stands. Prospects now point to below-average yields this season. The cabbage crop in South Alabama is in fair condition, but marketing is slow. In some instances the crop is being fed to livestock. In South Carolina, condition is poor. Much of the crop has a reddish, drowned-out appearance and "seeders" are very prevalent. Movement will hardly get under way before April 1. In Tennessee, setting of plants in the field began in a small way around March 3 but was delayed because of wet soil conditions. It is expected that this work will not be completed until about March 23, which will be a week to 10 days later than usual. Plants are reported as being plentiful and in good condition and a substantial increase in acreage is expected.

CANTALOUPS: California Imperial Valley cantaloups are now being thinned and the covers removed. Cantaloups have made a slow growth this year because of the generally cool weather which has prevailed in the Imperial Valley. With favorable growing weather from now on melons may be available about on schedule,

CANTALOUPE, CONT'D. although at this time they are a week to ten days behind a normal development. Some early acreage has been planted in the San Joaquin Valley; however, the bulk of the planting in this area will be made during the next four weeks. Present indications point to a sizeable increase in the acreage for July and August harvest in the San Joaquin Valley.

CARROTS: Harvest of the carrot crop in the California Imperial Valley is in "full swing" and is expected to continue fairly heavy for another 30 days. Some fields of carrots at Yuma, Arizona are expected to be harvested for dehydration, but fresh shipments may continue at the present rate from Yuma throughout March and the early part of April. Harvest in the Salt River Valley will remain light until about April when many of the spring planting will be mature. Most of the movement to-date has been bunched carrots. Prospects remain favorable for good quality and tonnage. Supplies of carrots in Texas continue plentiful, but shipments showed a slight decline compared with the previous two-week period. Most of the reduced movement was in the Winter Garden section where early season progress was poor. Coastal Bend crops were benefited by rains the past two-week period. A light harvest is started in this area, but volume will not be available until early April. The Lower Valley will continue to ship into June, but Winter Garden crops are expected to be cleaned up a little earlier than usual.

CAULIFLOWER: Warm weather in California last week hastened maturity of the cauliflower crop in the central coastal areas and daily shipments sharply increased. Because of frost Wednesday morning in most of the northern cauliflower producing area cutting was slowed considerable and the deal will probably get back to a more normal production. Most of the spring cauliflower will be harvested by the end of March. Harvesting of Oregon winter cauliflower which is concentrated in the Roseburg area was retarded by cold weather around March 15. The peak of the harvest is expected during the week of March 20-25. Quality thus far has been good.

CELERY: The Florida celery crop held up fairly well under the dry, hot weather of February, but yields were reduced in some instances by over maturity and disease. The recent rains have greatly improved conditions. The rail carlot movement through March 15 was 4,375 cars compared with 4,281 cars for the same period last year. Planting of the spring crop is nearing completion.

CUCUMBERS: In Florida, dry weather did some damage to that part of the spring acreage which was not under irrigation or was planted on high land. Most of the crop, however, is in good condition. A few early pickings are just beginning to come in, with the deal getting under way by April 1. Supplies will be available during April from the trough acreage in Sumter and Lake Counties, Wauchula, Manatee, Fort Myers, Immokolee and Indian River sections. The acreage around McIntosh should come into production about May 15 with the LaCrosse section coming in a week later. In Texas, a large acreage of cucumbers is planted and conditions have been favorable for good stands and early growth. Worm damage has been rather extensive, but some fields are undamaged and those seriously hurt are being replanted. A few isolated districts could use additional moisture, but the area as a whole has a splendid moisture supply. Present progress of the crops indicate a fairly good volume of April production with all areas furnishing supplies in early May.

EGGPLANT: The movement from the Florida winter acreage continues light, with Pompano and Fort Myers being the chief sources of supply. Transplanting of the spring crop has been completed in most of the central counties.

ESCAROLE: The Florida escarole deal in the Manatee, Sanford, and Winter Garden sections is practically finished. Supplies during the remainder of the season will come largely from the Everglades and from small acreages on the muck at Weirsdale and Zellwood.

LETTUCE: Harvest in the California Imperial Valley should be completed in another week or ten days. Cool weather has been favorable for development of the late planted fields. Quality in the Valley shows a wide range. Some lettuce will be harvested out of the Delano district toward the end of the week or the first part of next week. With favorable weather it is quite likely that there will be a fair movement out of this section by the first of April. In the Salinas-Watsonville district, a little of the early planting will be available for harvest toward the end of March and it is possible that the first of April will see a light daily movement out of the Salinas area. Lettuce plantings in most districts of the state have made excellent progress during the past two weeks.

Current supplies of Arizona lettuce are moving largely from Yuma, where harvest is expected to continue heavy until March 22 but may be virtually complete by the end of the month. Spring plantings in the Salt River Valley are now coming into production, and movement is expected to increase sharply during the next week. With the season delayed, large supplies of lettuce in the Salt River Valley will be available for harvest during the next month, and it now appears that shipments will be in heavy volume from March 22 until about April 10. Yield and quality prospects have improved by recent rains and lower temperatures.

In Florida, the Boston lettuce season is practically finished in the Sanford and Manatee sections. Some shipments are being made from the acreage around McIntosh. This deal will last until around April 1. A light movement of Iceberg is coming from the Everglades and from a small late acreage at Sanford. Plantings in the Weirdale and Florahome section will not be ready for harvesting before the first week in April. South Carolina is not expected to yield very heavily because of recent heavy rains. Shipping may begin about March 25 but it will likely be April 1 before it becomes general. Peak movement is expected around April 15. Lettuce in North Carolina is growing nicely with little or no damage from wet or cold weather. Some fields are becoming grassy, but one or two warm, dry days will be sufficient to permit cultivation. There should be a light movement about April 25, reaching heavy volume within a week or so after that.

ONIONS: Practically all south Texas onion areas received good rains March 10-11 and temperatures during the remainder of the past two-week period were favorable for crop development. Absence of reports on the early March blight infestation were noticeable. Coastal Bend crops were reported in good condition and the weather in other districts was favorable for average-season progress. Harvest of the south Texas crop for green onions became widespread the first half of March, but the Raymondville area was the only section shipping solid carlots. A total of 12 solid cars of green onions were moved by the middle of March, with considerable volume going into mixed cars. Temperatures during the past two weeks were more conducive to maturity of crops in the Laredo district than in other areas, but crops in this section were more in need of growing weather than favorable maturing conditions. The weather the last half of March will have a marked influence on the probable maturity dates in all areas.

Progress of the North Texas crop is later than this area has experienced in several years. Moisture has been excessive in all areas with only short intervals of dry weather since December. Some plants have been "mudded-in" and those set under favorable weather conditions have made only slow growth. Plantings that were expected to show about 25 percent increase over last year are now expected to be considerably under last year's acreage. Loss of plants has been heavy in all sections. Supplies however, are still plentiful in south Texas, but the time element in getting them into the North Texas area is an important factor now. Perfect weather the remainder

ONIONS, CONT'D: of March may result in considerable acreage being set but continued rains will result in a drastic reduction. The Taylor district is still planting, but most other early districts quit planting about March 10. Practically all the old onion districts - north of Ellis County - plan to set plants to the fields the remainder of March. A small acreage has been growing since January and no serious weather has affected these crops, but most of the crop was planted in late February and early March or still remains to be planted. Under the most favorable conditions the rest of the season, volume production from North Texas is not expected until around the middle of June.

Plantings in California made good headway during the past 2 weeks in practically all areas of the state. The early crops in southern California and in the San Joaquin Valley have been weeded and cultivated and are in good condition generally. Late onions are still being planted and indications now point to an acreage heavier than that anticipated earlier in the deal.

GREEN PEAS: Harvest of spring peas in the Imperial Valley of California will probably continue through March. The bulk of the crop has been picked and the remaining shipments out of the Valley will be light. Low temperatures the morning of March 15 damaged the pea crops in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Harvest will be delayed and early volume reduced in most sections. The Bakersfield area shows spotted effect with a probable 30 to 40 percent reduction in the crop. Firebough Mendota area was not seriously hurt but there was some "burn" damage. Peas were cut back in the Los Banos and Madera area and will have to produce vines to make a crop which will come in hot weather. In the Tracy Carbona section about half the acreage was in bloom or pod and will now be delayed until the new crop forms. Late plantings were cut back 3 to 4 weeks. Some hill planting around Tracy was apparently unhurt. River sections were delayed 3 to 4 weeks on most plantings.

The movement of Florida peas is very light. The deal in the Everglades is practically finished. Scattered plantings over the central part of the State are coming into bearing but most of this production is going into local consumption. Picking on the acreage around McIntosh will begin about March 20. In Mississippi, a small crop is indicated this year because of reduced acreage and only fair yield prospects. Plants are beginning to bloom but are below normal in growth for mid-March. In South Carolina, peas are approaching the blooming stage in reasonably good condition, and first shipments are expected about April 15. Reports indicate a smaller acreage.

PEPPERS: The Florida winter acreage in the Pompano section has passed its peak of production and the volume is now declining. The dry, hot weather damaged that part of the crop which was not under water control, but the rest of the crop is in fair condition. Under favorable conditions a good volume should be maintained well into April. The spring crop in the central counties has been transplanted and is making good progress.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: The Dade County, Florida crop is over one-half dug. Yields have been very light and sizes small. The Hastings section has had several good rains recently and the crop is now in excellent condition. Most of the crop is well advanced and with favorable conditions for the remainder of the season high yields should be produced. Digging will start in the more advanced fields around Federal Point and Bunnell the week of March 27. The crop around LaCrosse suffered slight frost damage but most of the plants were not far enough advanced to be materially affected. Moisture conditions are good and the crop is growing nicely.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES, CONT'D: The Texas Lower Valley potato crop is in good condition. Growing conditions were favorable the first half of March. Blight that was showing in a few fields in early March has been checked. Prospects now point to early April production and most of the crop will be harvested by May 1. Crops in the early sections outside of the Lower Valley - mostly non-irrigated acreage - received good rains the past two weeks are making the usual progress with a few fields a little further advanced than normal. Some production will be available the early part of May. Plantings of the central Texas crop was pretty well completed around the middle of March, but moisture is excessive and continued wet weather may result in some loss of acreage. Late sections of the Late Spring group of counties are still too wet to plant and if growers cannot get into the fields the next two weeks a material reduction of commercial plantings may occur.

In California, frost hit the potato deal in Kern County hard the morning of March 15 with a temperature of 26 degrees. It is impossible to determine at this time the full extent of the damage, but harvest which was expected to start on some of the early acreage April 10 will be delayed. Sizes also will be reduced. A considerable part of the acreage was burned back to the ground and will be delayed a week or 10 days. With the total of close to 50,000 acres in the county, approximately 19,000 acres were in the early districts of Edison and Lerdo, and perhaps 10,000-15,000 acres were advanced to where tubers had already formed.

In Mississippi, plantings vary from normal to two weeks late. Wet soil delayed planting and caused some rotting of seed in the ground. Plantings are expected to be largely completed this week. Probably 50 percent of the acreage is now up. In the Baldwin County, Alabama, area the crop is getting off to a good start. Weather has been favorable and stands are good. Low temperatures during the past week did no material harm, and indications are that the crop will begin to move about the first week in May. The South Carolina crop is planted, but is not yet up to a stand. Recent heavy rains have been unfavorable for germination, but it is too early to assess damage to stands, if any,

In Arkansas, potato planting has been seriously delayed because of wet fields; probably less than one-half of the intended acreage is in the ground. It is likely that the intended acreages will not be planted because of the lateness of the season. In Louisiana, potatoes generally have responded satisfactorily to recent more favorable weather and earlier plantings are making good growth. However, stands are expected to be uneven in some areas because of seed rot. Excessive early season rains caused irregular planting and much of the crop went into the ground two or three weeks later than usual. This is expected to result in a somewhat delayed and irregular harvesting season. In Tennessee, February and March rains have delayed soil preparation and planting of potatoes. Field work is 1 to 2 weeks behind the usual schedule with most plantings expected to be made during the second half of March. For this reason, acreage planted may fall below that intended. In North Carolina potato planting continues to be delayed because of excessive soil moisture, with 60 to 70 percent of the planting done to date. Some early potatoes were lost by rotting, and in low places in fields some late plantings have rotted. Indications are that stands may be rather spotted, with a consequent reduction in yields. There also has been some leaching of fertilizer because of flooding.

SPINACH: In Texas, shipments the remainder of the season will come mainly from the Eagle Pass and Winter Garden irrigated districts. Supplies of good quality spinach will be available through most of April. Both of these districts expect to finish the season with about the same movement as was shipped last year. Spinach in Arkansas has shown marked recovery in quality in the past two weeks.

SPINACH, CONT'D. Harvesting for canning has been delayed because of wet fields. Four cars of fresh spinach moved out the first week in March and a fresh market movement in volume probably will start about April 1.

The spring spinach crop in Washington will be increased over last year, especially in the Puget Sound area, where harvest has already started. Harvest will begin April 5 in the Walla Walla area but not until May around Spokane. In Pennsylvania winter-planted acreage of spinach in the Bucks-Philadelphia area was reduced sharply compared with a year ago. The wintered-over crop is generally in only fair condition. A rather large increase in spring-planted spinach is expected in this area. The wintered-over crop in other southeastern areas is generally in good condition, but acreages are comparatively small. In the northeastern sections of the State, the crop was nearly all frozen out owing to the lack of adequate snow protection.

SHALLOTS: Louisiana shallots responded to recent bright, open weather and the late crop is showing good quality. Older shallots are about finished. Supply continues rather short.

SQUASH: Florida squash is moving in volume from all the winter sections. Principal points are Pompano, Homestead, Fort Myers, and Fort Pierce. The acreage in the Central counties, principally around Plant City and McIntosh, is making good progress. Harvest around Plant City should become fairly active by April 1.

STRAWBERRIES: Continued favorable weather in Louisiana has developed the strawberry crop rapidly. The first solid car moved March 14 with 7 cars being shipped the following day - the earliest carlot movement date since 1939 when the first carload was shipped March 11. Although acreage is down 20 percent from last year, present prospects are for about average yields in contrast to the very low yields of a year ago. Some crown rot has been reported but generally plants are developing satisfactorily. Although slightly small, the present berries are coloring nicely. In Florida, recent rains were beneficial to the strawberry crop in the Plant City area where the volume had been materially reduced by the dry weather. Shipments will be very light from this section for the remainder of the season. The small acreage in the Starke-Lawtey section is now in production and will reach its peak around April 1. In South Alabama the crop is in fair condition and harvest will begin about April 15. In Central and North Alabama the crop is in poor condition and movement will begin about May 1. Acreage this year is substantially less than last and stands are good.

The extreme drought in Tennessee during last summer and fall reduced the strawberry stands and caused a substantial reduction in acreage for picking this year. February rainfall of about 10 inches, with mild temperatures, was favorable for growth, and unless the crop is injured by later freezes a fair yield is in prospect. Very few growers expect a good yield even with favorable weather because of poor stands and small size of plants. Freeze damage to Arkansas strawberries was negligible since only scattering buds had developed at the time of the freeze March 7 and 8. The crop has advanced about normally.

TOMATOES: The Florida winter acreage in Dade and Broward Counties is now in the peak of production. The Broward County acreage is in excellent condition and producing good yields, but condition of the Dade County crop is considerably below normal. Labor for harvesting the crop is scarce and some production is being left in the field. Recent rains have benefited the Collier County crop and this acreage will be in full production by the last week in March.

TOMATOES: CONT'D: The Florida spring acreage in the Manatee and Indian River sections is making good progress. Some early fields might be ready by April 10 but very little activity is expected before April 15. The scattered acreage in the central counties is well advanced and making good progress.

The Texas Lower Valley tomato crop continued to make good progress during the past two weeks. Some fields have plants beginning to bloom and the weather is favorable for the early blooms to hold. With continued favorable weather, this district promises a fairly good volume of mid-April production. Harvest of the Lower Valley crop started last season about the middle of April, with the first solid carlot moving April 19. Plants for a large acreage in East Texas are available, but the outlook at this time is not too favorable. All areas have been too wet. A large part of the plants have been set to the cold frames, but plants have not made the desired growth and some losses have occurred. A few growers plan to begin setting plants to the fields the last two weeks in March and some are going set direct from the hot beds to the fields. The continued rains have delayed preparation of the land and any further delay in getting into the fields may result in the curtailment of planting activities.

In Mississippi, tomato plants are in cold frames in fair to good condition. Transplanting to open fields will begin the week of March 20, if weather conditions permit. In Tennessee, relatively mild weather with plenty of rainfall has been favorable for tomato plants, which are still in hot beds. Very little work has been done on the cold frames because of wet weather. Growers expect to start transplanting to cold frames about March 15. The crop was profitable last year but most growers expect a reduced acreage this year because of the uncertain labor situation.

WATERMELONS: In Florida the watermelon crop in the Leesburg section is making excellent progress. Recent rains have been very beneficial and the crop is well advanced. With favorable conditions a few growers are expecting to have melons ready for market by the week of May 8. Some melons in the Live Oak section were killed by frost during the week of March 5-11 but only a small portion of the crop in this section was out of the ground at that time. In Texas, a large acreage of watermelons in the earliest districts is growing nicely. Prospects point to production around the middle of May. Plantings in central Texas made good progress the past two weeks and with good growing weather this area will have production about the middle of June. East Texas areas are still too wet to plant but growers plan a large acreage. Moisture conditions are favorable in all districts of the State.

Continued from page 1.

Planting operations in later spring districts are behind schedule because of excessively wet fields. The delay is affecting the North Texas onion acreage particularly and retarding field work in the East Texas tomato area. Early potato crops are planted and making good headway. Later districts have planted only a small acreage during intervals of dry weather. Most of these districts still have time to plant average acreages with the exception of onions, and moisture is ample to carry crops for a long period.

The drought which had prevailed over southern and central Florida for most of the winter months was broken by rains during the week of March 5-11, which came just in time to prevent a widespread deterioration of crops. Conditions are now favorable for all crops except in a few localities where the rainfall was light. In the winter section of Florida, where the rainfall was lightest, many of the crops were too far advanced to benefit materially but in the spring section the rains were of great value. A few frosts occurred in the northern and central part of the state during

the first half of March but the damage to crops was very slight. Planting of most of Florida spring crops is completed or nearing completion, and development is much further advanced than is usual at this season of the year. Labor for harvesting the crops now in production is a serious problem which is giving the growers much concern. Some produce has been left in the fields because of the scarcity of labor and the fact that returns to growers were unsatisfactory.

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