



Commercial Truck Crops

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TRUCK CROP NEWS (as of January 1, 1944)

Commercial vegetables in California, Arizona and Texas, for the most part, made satisfactory progress during the second half of December. Low temperatures in Florida did extensive damage to tender crops, but hardy crops escaped with minor damage.

The cold wave in Florida during the period December 17-21 did extensive damage to snap beans, cucumbers, eggplant, peas, squash, and tomatoes. Strawberries were delayed 3 to 4 weeks through loss of bloom, and in some sections of the State potato vines were burned. Cabbage, celery, escarole and lettuce escaped with slight damage. In northern Florida rainfall was heavy. Central and southern Florida received light to moderate rains, which, following a long drought, were especially beneficial.

In Texas, crops made satisfactory progress, although two brief periods of cold weather around the middle of December and wet weather throughout the area delayed harvesting and planting activities. Damage to growing crops was negligible. Hardy crops generally are in good condition, with prospects for good yields of beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, peas, potatoes and turnips. Spinach is showing some improvement, but carrot crops continue to make poor progress, especially in the Winter Garden area. Field work was stopped in practically all areas by weather the last three days of December.

Most California vegetable areas received light rains the latter part of December. Plantings in the central and southern San Joaquin Valley, where moisture is deficient, have not suffered materially, but the acreage planted for spring harvest would be improved by additional moisture. During the next few months the Desert areas will be fairly active in the vegetable deal. Imperial Valley lettuce, carrots, peas, and cabbage will move in fairly heavy volume during January, February, and March. Loadings in the southern and coastal districts during this period will be confined principally to broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and celery, with a rather sizeable volume of mixed cars. Spring crops will start in California with the harvest of peas in late February and March.

In Arizona, above-normal rainfall in the Salt River Valley has been conducive to heavy yields and good quality for all truck crops. The Yuma section did not share in the December rains, but prospects in this area also are good.

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ARTICHOKES: Supplies of California artichokes will be heavier as January advances, reaching full production in February and March.

GREEN LIMA BEANS: The acreage of winter lima beans in Florida is greatly reduced from that planted last year. The crop is only in fair condition at this time, owing to the lands being too wet at the beginning of the season and to the recent cold weather which caused a great deal of bloom and small pods to shed. A small acreage in the Ft. Pierce and Boynton sections is being picked now. Supplies should start from Indiantown in a week or ten days. Picking on the acreage around Pahokee was just beginning at the time of the frost, but a part of the crop was salvaged. Supplies from the State will continue very light for the next two weeks.

SNAP BEANS: Loss of acreage by frost in the Florida Lake Okeechobee section was extremely heavy. With the exception of a small acreage, very close to the Lake, the entire crop was frozen. Some fields were partly salvaged for a few days after the frost but this has been completed. The fall crop was approximately 85 percent harvested at the time of the frost, but the plantings for harvest during January were heavier than usual and the greater part of this acreage was killed. Replanting has been heavy and a larger winter acreage than usual is expected. Beans which were in the ground at the time of the frost should be ready for harvest about February 1. In the Pompano section there was a small loss of acreage but considerable damage was done to the bloom and "pin-beans". On account of this, yields will be reduced on the acreage which should be picked during the next three weeks. In the Honestead area, where harvesting was just getting under way, the damage was extremely heavy. Possibly 1,500 acres were either unhurt or slightly damaged. Planting continues, and indications are that most of the original acreage will be replanted. Shipments from the State during January will be considerably reduced.

BEETS: In Texas, growth of beets was slightly retarded by the recent cold weather. Tops in some areas were discolored but no losses occurred. Considerable tonnage moved as topped beets the last few days in December. Crops in the Coastal Bend are developing slowly because of the cold weather, but supplies will be plentiful in other districts and shipments should be active starting the early part of January and continuing through April.

BROCCOLI: Harvest in California is in its peak, with loadings out of San Jose, Castroville, and Guadalupe on the coastal districts. The crop is doing nicely and cutting out fairly heavy yields. Production should lighten toward the end of January as harvesting of the bulk of the early planting will have been completed by then. Harvest of broccoli in the Arizona Salt River Valley shows a gradual increase, and movement is expected to be in good volume by January 10. Solid carlot shipments started in Mid-December, but have been relatively light to date. Some increase in straight cars is expected during the next two weeks, but most of the broccoli will continue to move in mixed cars. Large sizes have developed and yields have been increased by December rainfall. Quality is unusually good.

CABBAGE: In Oregon, weather conditions were favorable for harvesting, and more local cabbage moved to the Portland market from nearby fields. Rail shipments, however, were very light. Quality is reported good, and unless low temperatures interfere, cutting should continue well into February. In California, cabbage is in limited supply, but should continue its present volume for another two weeks. Imperial Valley plantings will not be available in appreciable carlots before late January. Dehydrators are taking a rather sizeable volume at the present time from plantings in the coastal areas. In the Arizona Salt River Valley, harvest of the earliest plantings is nearing completion, but later plantings are now coming

CABBAGE, CONT'D: into production. Volume is expected to increase during the first half of January and a considerable portion of the crop will be shipped in mixed vegetable cars. Mid-season plantings at Yuma will supplement supplies in the Salt River Valley after February 1. Excellent quality is expected in January, and heavier than usual tonnage is expected.

Shipments of Texas cabbage continue considerably below those of this date last year but the season is just getting under way. A large crop is in prospect with shipments expected to be active by the middle of January. Conditions have been favorable for cabbage with the exception of a few scattered fields in the lower end of the Rio Grande Valley where moisture has been excessive. Yield prospects in the Valley are above average and crops in the Coastal Bend have sufficient moisture to practically assure a crop. Present cuttings are furnishing light weight cabbage but by mid-January excellent quality cabbage is expected. Shipments from the Coastal Bend are not expected to be important until after the middle of the month. On the whole, the Florida cabbage crop came through the cold weather with very little loss. In extremely cold places cabbage of all ages was damaged. Occasional fields were badly damaged but most crops were unhurt. Cutting has started in all sections and the movement should increase considerably during January.

CARROTS: The bulk of local marketings in Oregon are now on a topped or clip-topped basis because of the deterioration of tops. Local offerings should continue for another two months, although some out-of-state stock is now coming on the market. The bulk of the California fall crop has been harvested, although loadings will continue throughout January from the coastal districts. In addition to the carlot movement a fairly active demand has developed in the Bay area for sacked carrots. Loadings out of the Imperial Valley will not be in any appreciable volume until late in January. Although solid carlot shipments in Arizona have declined during the past week, a considerable volume of carrots has moved in mixed cars. Practically all of the stock from Yuma has moved in mixed cars with lettuce. To date virtually all of the movement has been bunched carrots, with a very small volume of topped carrots shipped in mixed cars. Yields of early plantings were reduced because of light stands, but heavier tonnage is expected of later plantings now coming into production. The weather has been ideal for good root development.

Prospects continue unfavorable in the Texas Winter Garden, but crops in the Lower Valley district are showing considerable improvement. Shipments to the latter part of December were only 64 percent of those of a year earlier, and movement during the early part of January is expected to remain light. Practically all the Winter Garden acreage for January harvest will show heavy losses; tops are badly damaged and the root stock is poorly developed. Plantings in the Coastal Bend will not furnish much production until late spring. Crops in the Lower Valley are much improved, and conditions are favorable for late plantings to make good progress. Shipments will probably not reach the usual active rate of movement until February. Yields for the season will average lighter than usual because of the heavy losses of crops harvested to date.

CAULIFLOWER: In Douglas County, Oregon, cutting of early strains of winter cauliflower has begun. Marketing of the later strains is expected to begin the last of January, with the peak expected about March 1. To date plants have been free from injurious frosts and stands are exceptionally good. The crop made good growth during the fall months. The acreage was increased this year over last. The fall cauliflower deal, which is concentrated in the Portland area, is practically over, with only a limited amount of fair to poor quality stock remaining. Heavy loadings may be expected out of the California coastal districts during January. Most of the movement will originate in the Guadalupe area where the crop is of good quality and is cutting fairly heavy yields. The crop in southern California should

CAULIFLOWER, CONT'D: continue its present rate of production, with the bulk of the available supply moving to local markets and in mixed car sales. Quality of the southern "flower" has shown some improvement since the December rains, and fields are now producing fairly good yields. In Arizona, a continued increase in solid carlot shipments is expected during the first week of January, and seasonal movement will be heaviest during the first half of the month. Much of the cauliflower is expected to continue moving in mixed cars. Yields are running heavier than usual, and quality is exceptionally good.

CELERY: In Florida, plantings of celery to January 1 are approximately the same as for the same period a year earlier. In the Sanford section the crop is a little backward in development, with some fields showing irregularity. Harvesting has commenced, but volume will be light until the middle of January. The Sarasota crop is in excellent condition, with cutting expected to begin the first week in January. The Lake Okeechobee crop went through the cold weather with only minor damage. The condition is generally good. Cutting will become general in all sections during the next two weeks.

Harvest is about completed in the California Delta area of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. A few late fields remain which will be cleaned up this month. In the coastal districts, harvest will continue fairly active well into January. Sizes continue large and most fields are producing quite heavy yields. Chula Vista celery has started in a small way, and the movement from this section should be active during the latter part of this month. The bulk of the Chula Vista acreage will mature in February. The plantings have shown an improvement during the past ten days, benefiting from the December rains.

CUCUMBERS: The Florida fall cucumber deal is finished. A few scattered plantings in the southern part of the State were being picked at the time of the frost. Most of this acreage was either damaged by cold or disease. Only occasional small lots can be expected until new plantings come in.

EGGPLANT: In Florida, the small production from the fall crop of eggplant in the Winter Garden, Wauchula, Manatee and Ft. Myers sections was further reduced by frost. In the Wauchula section, the crop was practically wiped out. In the Winter Garden, Manatee and Ft. Myers sections, the damage ranged from complete loss to slight. In the Ft. Pierce and Pompano sections the damage was slight, but most crops were retarded. Supplies during January will be very light.

ESCAROLE: Florida escarole suffered very little damage from the cold. A small acreage in the Lake Okeechobee section was lost, but the principal damage was confined to burning of the leaves which will result in heavy trimming in some instances. Shipments have increased sharply and a steady volume is in prospect.

LETTUCE: Harvest in the California Imperial Valley should attain full headway during the next two weeks and continue an active movement through February. A heavy December rain disturbed the normal valley routine and made it difficult to work the fields and harvest the early acreage. A small amount of the late fall crop remains in the coastal and valley districts. This production, which is being harvested for local dry pack trade, is of fair quality, although lacking size and the solidity of the valley lettuce. In Arizona, a gradual decline in movement from the Salt River Valley during the first half of January will be partially offset by increased shipments from Yuma. Harvest at Yuma is expected to reach a peak between January 15 and 20, with a probable maximum of 55 to 60 cars daily. A larger than usual volume of lettuce is moving this season in mixed cars. With sizes running larger than usual, yields are expected to be heavy. A shortage of cars and shock was responsible for some reduction of volume from the Salt River Valley during the past two weeks.

LETTUCE, CONT'D: The Florida lettuce crop is in fair condition, with only negligible damage from cold. The movement of Iceberg from the Ruskin-Manatee area should increase during January.

ONIONS: In Texas, progress of growing crops is satisfactory in all districts, but field work in the irrigated districts was retarded the last half of December by cold weather and in most areas by wet fields. Transplanting was incomplete in the Laredo - Winter Garden - Eagle Pass districts and it is quite doubtful if any irrigated area will have their expected acreage. Plantings in the Winter Garden may show a small increase over last year but other irrigated districts including Laredo will do well to equal last year's acreage unless excellent weather prevails the first few days in January. Most growers will stop planting after about January 10. To offset the probable limited acreage in the irrigated sections, there is a tremendous increase of dry-land acreage. Conditions in the Coastal Bend and Raymondville districts were much more favorable for planting than indicated when intentions to plant were reported the latter part of October. Moisture was excessive in a few sections of the dry-land areas but conditions are mostly favorable and plants are making excellent growth. Considerable acreage in the Raymondville district is furnishing large supplies of green onions. Several hundred acres may be utilized in this manner but a large acreage will remain for commercial onions.

All Texas districts have ample moisture. This has resulted in much saving of labor in the irrigated districts that could have been diverted to transplanting had conditions been favorable for transplanting. Early transplanted crops are beginning to grow nicely and no adverse weather has affected crops in any districts. A light movement of plants is started into the North Texas area, but field work in this area will not be general until the latter part of January. Plants are plentiful for a large acreage to be set out but final plantings will depend somewhat on the available labor supply and crop prospects in other areas.

In California supplies of late onions are limited. Most of the late crop production has been taken by the War Food Administration or was grown under contract to the dehydrators. Local markets are now using out-of-state onions almost entirely. The new crop plantings are being made, and a rather sizeable expansion has developed in the Bermuda acreage and in the plantings of intermediate crop in the Stockton area. No appreciable acreage of late onions has been planted, but indications point to an increased acreage of late onions, especially in the coastal districts.

GREEN PEAS: Harvest in the California Imperial Valley has about been completed on the fall acreage and is moving into the mid-winter plantings. Without a serious frost, the present movement will continue until the spring acreage is ready to pick, shortly after mid-January. Some peas are still being harvested from the fall acreage in the Edison district of Kern County. However, this crop should be finished in another ten days. Plantings in the Lake Okeechobee section of Florida were very light prior to the middle of December. Harvest had begun at the time of frost but the movement was very light. Some fields were killed by frost but most of the growing crop escaped with minor damage, particularly the loss of bloom and small peas. Planting was very active immediately following the frost, but acreage will still be small compared with previous years.

PEPPERS: The small fall pepper crop in Florida was further reduced by the recent cold. In the Wauchula section most of the acreage was killed. In the Winter Garden area, outlying fields were killed, with slight damage to the crops protected by the Lake. In the Manatee section most of the crop suffered only slight damage, but some fields were badly hit. Ft. Myers had only slight damage. In the Lake Okeechobee section most of the plants were badly damaged but a small acreage was unhurt.

PEPPERS, CONT'D: The winter crop along the Florida East Coast is later than usual, and cold damage was slight. The older plantings are in only fair condition, but the younger plantings are growing nicely. Shipments are coming from widely scattered areas and the volume should continue light for another two weeks.

COMMERCIAL EARLY IRISH POTATOES: In the Lower Valley of Texas, a good crop of potatoes is in prospect from the winter-crop acreage. A few fields furnished a light harvest the latter part of December but most growers were awaiting the increased ceiling price levels effective January 1. Harvest should be active by the middle of January and supplies will continue to be available throughout February. A few solid carlots will move but a large part of this tonnage will be used for mixed car loadings. Planting of the Lower Valley spring-crop acreage got under way around the middle of December and progress of the crop as a whole is a little earlier than usual. Field work was stopped the latter part of the month by wet fields, but planting of this crop can continue through January. Considerable acreage for spring harvest this season is being planted in the Raymondville section. Germination of seed is a little slow, but at this time no loss of acreage is indicated.

In Florida, the potato crop in the Lake Okeechobee section was practically mature at the time of the frost. The yields on a few fields of late plantings were cut but the crop as a whole suffered only minor damage. Digging is underway, and the heaviest movement should come during the first three weeks of January. The Dade County crop has had several setbacks. Heavy rains at planting caused some loss of acreage and irregular stands. The recent frost damaged the tops of a large portion of the crop and blight has been prevalent in many fields, with considerable damage being done. Indications are for greatly reduced yields in this section. The Ft. Myers crop is reported to be making favorable progress.

SPINACH: Texas spinach crops were showing considerable improvement until the last few days in December when wet and cold weather developed in most districts, mainly the irrigated sections. Better quality spinach was in prospect from these sections but further delay may now be expected until the weather gets better. Mold and rust has been prevalent in most districts. Considerable early acreage in the Coastal Bend was a complete loss, but crops coming into production the last few days in December and early January were improved in quality and yields. Supplies will be available in good volume during January and February. A large acreage is growing in the Lower Valley - mostly in the Raymondville district - but canners expect to take considerable tonnage if containers are available.

Seeding for late spring harvest was active in the Eagle Pass and Winter Garden districts of Texas the last half of December. Need of irrigating has been materially reduced by rains but harvesting activities were interrupted which resulted in movement falling much below shipments to this date last season. Total movement to the last of January, however, shows an increase of 21 percent over the same date last year with all the increase coming from the Coastal Bend and Lower Valley districts. Out-of-state canning plants are taking considerable volume of the present carlot movement and local canning plants are fairly active in all areas.

SQUASH: The Florida squash crop was badly damaged by the frost, although occasional fields in scattered areas escaped. The main source of supply until new plantings come in will be the lower East Coast, with Pompano the main shipping point.

STRAWBERRIES: In Florida, practically all blooms and some fruit were killed by the freezing temperatures in the Plant City area. Plants were not damaged, but it will be the middle to the latter part of January before harvest will be resumed, and about the first of February before any volume is attained.

TOMATOES: Cold damage to the Florida tomato crop was variable, with all sections reporting some loss. The Ft. Pierce crop was about three-fourths harvested at the time of the frost. A few fields were badly damaged but most growers reported slight to no damage. In the Ruskin-Manatee section the loss was rather heavy on what was already a very light crop. The crop was in all stages of maturity. Some fields were just coming into bearing and others were practically finished. Shippers report that about half of the potential volume had been shipped by January 1. In Dade County, the crops on the West Glades and east and south of Homestead were badly damaged. The crop north of the Goulds canal was apparently unhurt. Since the crop as a whole is much later than usual, it is expected that a large part of this acreage will be replanted. It will be February 1 before shipments begin from the main crop.

In Broward county, Florida, most of the loss was on the West Glade, which represents about 15 percent of the acreage. The East Glade is practically all planted at this time, which is somewhat earlier than usual. Tomatoes are being harvested in Broward and Palm Beach counties from a heavier than usual fall acreage, but most of this volume is moving in bulk to southern markets. In the Trail section of Collier county the tomato crop suffered considerable damage. The acreage in this section will probably be much smaller than usual.

Seeding of the Texas Lower Valley spring-crop tomato acreage was started about the middle of December. In the west end of the Valley about two-thirds of the acreage was planted by the latter part of December and field work is active in all sections now. The advantage of an early marketing season may be realized if no adverse weather occurs but losses usually occur from the unusually early seeding and should damage become extensive the present large acreage could be materially lowered because of lack of seed. Reports indicate that seed was available for an acreage close to that of last year but supplies are practically exhausted. A few crops are up to a good stand and all areas have a splendid moisture supply for good growth to be expected. Advanced plants are more susceptible to damage from the usual late January cold weather than seedlings just out of the ground. Should the crop experience favorable growing weather an early April harvest can be expected.

In California, a small movement has started from the Imperial Valley, and will continue through the next two months provided frost or adverse weather does not interfere. This acreage has been planted primarily for the "green wrap" market. Local markets are taking an increasing volume of pinks and ripens out of the valley, although some late fall tomatoes are still available in southern districts of the State.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SPINACH FOR PROCESSING

INTENDED ACREAGE
 1944, with Comparisons

(Truck Crops for Commercial Processing)

According to reports received by the U. S. Department of Agriculture from spinach canners in California and Texas, the acreage of spinach to be harvested for canning in these two States in 1944 will total 20,190 acres. This is an increase of about 54 percent over the 1943 acreage.

On the basis of late December and early January reports from California, it appears that the acreage to be harvested for processing will be increased above 1943 by 55 percent. This prospective acreage is the largest since 1929, when 15,790 acres were harvested. The increase in Texas is 50 percent above 1943. Similar data are not available at this time for Arkansas, Oklahoma, Maryland, and Virginia.

1944: INTENDED ACREAGE OF SPINACH FOR CANNING, WITH COMPARISONS

STATE	PLANTED ACREAGE								INTENDED IN 1944	
	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	As Percent of 1943
	Acres									Pct.
California.	12,970	16,720	9,470	7,860	9,540	7,440	15,040	9,130	14,190	1 55
Texas	6,400	8,000	8,000	6,000	3,500	4,500	5,500	4,000	6,000	1 50
TOTAL	19,370	24,720	17,470	13,860	13,040	11,940	20,540	13,130	20,190	1 54