National Agricultural Statistics Service

Hawaii Agricultural Statistics
Hawaii Department of Agriculture

Hawaii Vegetables

Mark E. Hudson, Director

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Wintery weather extends into February

Weather conditions were generally unfavorable for vegetable crops during February. The unstable weather at the end of January carried over into February as a strong low pressure system brought heavy showers to all islands. The heaviest rains were on Kauai on February 2 and in the Hilo, Puna, and Ka`u districts of the Big Island on February 4. Flash flooding occurred on both of these islands as rainfall totals were in the 6 to 12 inch range. After the passage of the storm, a brief period of favorable weather prevailed as trade wind conditions returned to the State. A strong shear line entered the islands on February 11 bringing with it heavy showers and blustery northeast winds which further slowed crop progress. Weather conditions for the remainder of the month were fair to favorable as trade winds once again returned. A couple of passing fronts brought some additional, mostly light, showers during the closing weeks. Most vegetable crops made improved growth as the month progressed after being initially setback by heavy showers, cloudy skies, and blustery winds.

Changes in harvested acreage will be mixed for vegetable crops in March. Five vegetables are expected to show a gain in harvested acreage in March, and all are anticipated to be double-digit percentage increases; **snap beans** (+33%), **head cabbage** (+15%), **sweet corn** (+42%), **cucumbers** (+21%), and **dry onions** (+58%). On the other hand, five vegetable crops are expected to show a decline in harvested acreage; **Chinese cabbage** (-3%), **mustard cabbages** (-17%), **head lettuce** (-43%), **green onions** (-15%), and **romaine** (-7%). Harvested acreage of **semi-head lettuce (Manoa)** will remain unchanged at 4 acres. ■

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Acreage Acres planted, harvested, and for harvest for 11 selected vegetables, State of Hawaii.

Crop	Acres planted		Acres harvested		Acres for harvest	
	Jan 2005	Feb 2005	Jan 2005	Feb 2005	Mar 2005	Apr 2005
Beans, snap	8	7	12	6	8	7
Cabbage, Chinese	33	29	23	29	28	18
Cabbage, head	50	51	32	40	46	48
Cabbage, mustard	12	10	11	12	10	7
Corn, sweet	29	34	25	19	27	33
Cucumbers	35	41	41	34	41	41
Lettuce, head	6	6	6	7	4	3
Lettuce, semi-head	4	4	4	4	4	4
Onions, dry	9	12	22	19	30	21
Onions, green	12	11	13	13	11	11
Romaine	14	14	11	15	14	8

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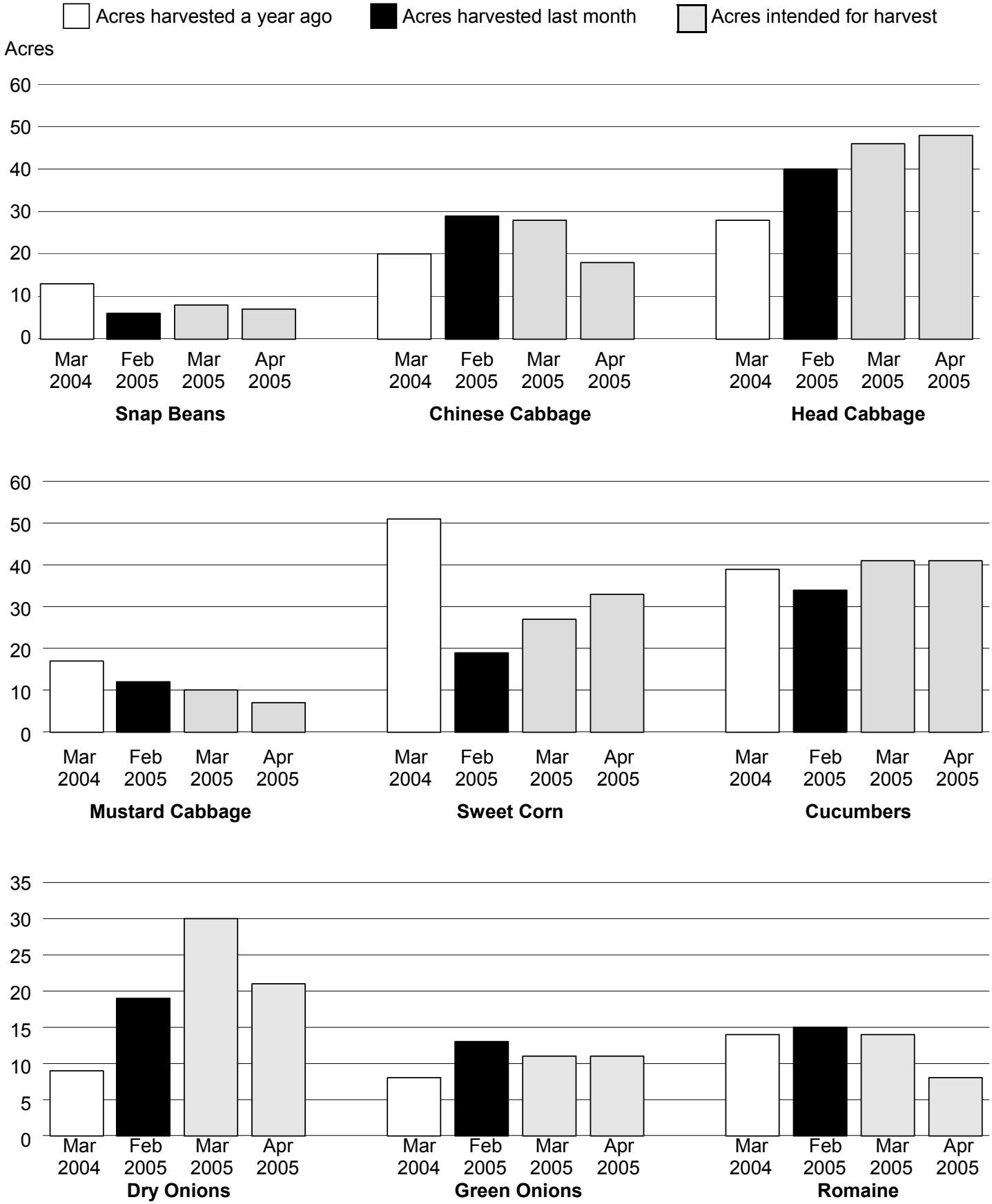
Harvested acreage charts



February review

Production up for most vegetables in February

SNAP BEANS production totaled 35,000 pounds in February, up 30 percent from January. Although harvested acreage was down 50 percent, yields increased due to favorable conditions during the second half of the month.

HEAD CABBAGE production is estimated at 660,000 pounds, up 2 percent from last month. Farmers reported an increase in insect damage. However, growers are anticipating an increase in yields to meet this month's demand from St. Patrick's day.

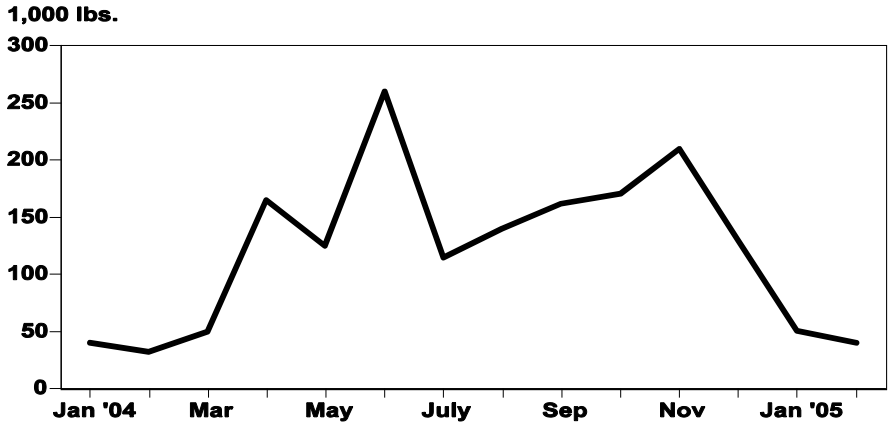
SWEET CORN production is estimated at 61,000 pounds for February, up 7 percent from the previous month. Crop conditions were fair to good as fields continue to dry out from previous rains. Extended daylight was also aiding crop development.

CUCUMBER production is estimated at 270,000 pounds for February, up 41 percent from January. Field plantings were in fair to poor conditions, but overall production got a boost from greenhouse plantings which were in good condition.

DRY ONION production totaled 40,000 pounds, down 22 percent from January. Overall crop conditions were improving, but a wet winter has taken a toll on harvesting marketable onions.

TOMATO production is pegged at 804,000 pounds for February, up 3 percent from January. Field tomato plantings were in fair to poor condition. Greenhouse tomatoes were in generally good condition. Warmer temperatures during the second half of the month are expected to help boost production in the coming months. ■

Hawaii Dry Onions:
Monthly Production, 2004 - 2005



Acreage, average yield, sales, and average farm price, February 2005, State of Hawaii.

Crop	Total acres on Mar 1st	February 2005				January-to-date sales		
		Acres harvested	Average yield 1/	Total sales	Average farm price	2004 2/	2005	Change
			- - - - - - - 1,000 lbs. - - - - - - -		Cents per lb.	- - - - - - - 1,000 lbs - - - - - - -		Percent
Beans, snap	15	6	2.3	35	134.4	124	62	-58
Cabbage, Chinese	42	29	23.0	582	33.7	825	1,087	23
Cabbage, head	90	40	21.7	660	26.5	1,060	1,310	20
Cabbage, mustard	13	12	7.5	116	64.9	192	199	-7
Corn, sweet	68	19	2.3	61	55.2	200	118	-47
Cucumbers	65	34	4.7	270	62.4	530	462	-34
Lettuce, head	7	7	8.3	45	58.5	110	95	0
Lettuce, semi-head	8	4	4.8	23	80.3	34	42	12
Onions, dry	70	19	2.3	40	173.3	72	91	28
Onions, green	26	13	5.9	65	129.6	141	142	-3
Peppers, green	3/	21	10.0	231	61.1	534	450	-21
Romaine	18	15	12.6	127	46.4	233	266	34
Tomatoes	3/	70	14.2	804	71.1	2,104	1,583	-35

1/ Total sales divided by acres harvested. 2/ Revised. 3/ Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

U.S. Romaine Lettuce

Highly nutritious and low in calories

Over the past 15 years, romaine lettuce (also known as *cos*) has been one of the country's fastest growing vegetables in terms of production, consumption, and exports. One of the four main types of the species, *Lactuca sativa* within the sunflower family, romaine has been in the human diet for thousands of years. One of the more nutritious lettuce crops, romaine is a good source of vitamins A and C, folate, and a variety of other nutrients, while remaining low in calories. Originating in the region east of the Mediterranean Sea, romaine is a cool-season crop, which grows well in the desert southwest during the winter and along the central coast of California at other times.

Main ingredient in salads

Romaine likely garnered much of its early popularity in the United States as the primary ingredient in the Caesar salad, which was said to be invented in Mexico during the 1920s by a chef who named it after himself.

Production is highly concentrated

In 2002, the Census of Agriculture disclosed romaine separately from the other lettuce for the first time. The Census indicated that 59,825 acres of romaine were produced by 709 farms in the United States. One-third of the farms with romaine are in California with the remainder spread over 37 other States. Production is highly concentrated, with just 5 percent of the Nation's annual crop produced outside of California (73 percent) and Arizona (22 percent).

Farm value exceeds $500 million

During 2002-04, the farm value of the U.S. romaine lettuce crop averaged $534 million, up from $131 million in 1992-94. The value of the romaine crop now exceeds that of crops such as carrots, cucumbers, cabbage, and cantaloup. California, by virtue of its year-round growing season, accounts for three-fourths of the romaine crop value. With lower productivity (yield) per acre, the season-average price for romaine usually exceeds that of head lettuce but is typically less than that of looseleaf lettuce.

Per capita consumption at record level

Per capita use of romaine lettuce has tripled since 1992-94, when it averaged 2.3 pounds. By 2004, per capita use of romaine lettuce has reached a record 8.1 pounds—up more than 4 pounds since 1999. Among several factors, part of this explosive growth is likely due to the expanding use of romaine in the foodservice industry and the continued strength of retail fresh-cut salad sales. Since 2000, supermarket sales of fresh-cut salads have more than doubled to over $3 billion.

Source: Vegetables and Melons Outlook/VGS-307, February 23, 2005, Economic Research Service, USDA.