

The five major fruit and berry crops grown in New Jersey are apples, blueberries, cranberries, peaches and strawberries. For the 2005 growing season, the winter kill affected the crops in the south west part of New Jersey. Drier conditions in early June reduced the threat from plant diseases. Sustained heat waves in late July and August benefited the berry and peach crops. Frequent rains in the late August and September improved the size of apples. As the season concluded, all five fruit and berry crops had higher production than a year ago.

Total production of the five fruit and berry crops during 2005 amounted to 215 million pounds, up 16 percent from the previous year's production of 185 million pounds. Value of utilized production of these crops totaled \$120.6 million, a 36 percent increase from the 2004 total of \$88.8 million. Value of utilized production was higher for all five fruit and berry crops from the previous year.

During 2005, among all major fruit and berry producing states in the nation, New Jersey ranked second in blueberry production; third in cranberry production; fourth in peach production; and sixteenth in apple production. Ranking crops by value of production within the state, blueberries ranked first with \$55.5 million. Peaches ranked second with \$30.9 million, while cranberries ranked third with \$18.1 million. Apples and strawberries ranked fourth and fifth with \$13.8 million and \$2.38 million, respectively.

It was a normal growing season for apple growers in New Jersey. Late season rainfall was able to improve the apple sizing problem and ended with a good crop. Apple quality was generally good. Total apple production, at 45 million pounds, was five million pounds higher than 2004. The season average price, at 31.3 cents per pound, was substantially higher than 15.1 cents 2004. This is the results of much higher percent of apples were sold for fresh market instead of processing use. Value of utilized production was \$13.8 million in 2005 compared with \$5.74 million in 2004. The leading apple producing county was Gloucester with 14.5 million pounds. Burlington ranked second with 4.8 million pounds and Warren ranked third with 4.5 million pounds. Sussex ranked fourth with 3.7 million pounds. Atlantic and Hunterdon counties tied fifth with 3.5 million pounds each.

It was a favorable growing season for New Jersey peach growers. The blooms were rated average to good although a cold snap in early May caused some damage. High temperatures in late July and early August accelerated the maturity of peaches and the trees showed signs of stress from sustained heat waves. Harvesting continued to the end of September. As the season concluded, New Jersey peach growers experienced one of the best marketing seasons in recent years. The demand for peaches was strong and the prices were high throughout the entire season. Peach utilized production totaled 33,700 tons, up 10 percent from 2004. Season average price, at \$916.00 per ton (45.8 cents per pound), was \$156.00 higher than last year's price.

Value of utilized production was \$30.9 million in 2005, 33 percent higher than in 2004. Gloucester county was the leading county with 17,500 tons while Cumberland was second with 6,500 tons. Camden ranked third with 3,100 tons and Burlington ranked fourth with 2,000 tons, followed by Atlantic with 1,550 tons.

Cranberry growers in New Jersey produced a total of 533,000 barrels in 2005, an increase of 131,000 barrels from 2004. The value of utilized production was \$18.1 million, up 47 percent from the \$12.3 million produced in 2004. Burlington county was the major cranberry producing area in the Garden State.

The 2005 total blueberry production of 45 million pounds was up 6 million pounds from 2004's total production of 39 million pounds. Value of utilized production was \$55.5 million compared to 2004's value of \$45.6 million. The season average price of \$1.23 per pound was up 5 percent from the \$1.17 per pound in 2004. This season average price for blueberries is the highest price on record that producers have ever received for the crop. Atlantic and Burlington counties were the leading blueberry producing areas.

There was 14,000 hundredweight of strawberries produced in New Jersey in 2005, 17 percent higher than in 2004. The season average price of \$170.00 per hundredweight is \$8.00 higher than a year ago. The higher production level and higher season average price brought the value of production to \$2.38 million, compared to \$1.94 million in 2004.