

Vegetables - 2007

2007 Vegetable Season: The season started early because of mild temperatures in the winter and early spring. The planting intentions were low due to the rising concerns of high production costs. Yield and quality of spring vegetables were generally good and the prices were fair. Summer plantings were also lower compared with last year. High temperatures and adequate moisture in the early summer were beneficial to the growth of summer crops. The low price of summer crops was the major concern among growers. This was especially true for the eggplant growers. Frequent thunderstorms caused some acreage loss for pepper fields. Dry conditions in late summer reduced fall plantings, but fall harvest was normal and the quality of crops was generally good. Harvest of fall crops continued into mid-November because of mild temperatures.

As the season concluded, the total planted acres for fresh vegetables was down 100 acres while the harvested acres increased 900 acres. Overall production increased 1.0 percent from 297,220 tons in 2006 to 300,260 tons in 2007. Despite the 17 percent increase of processing vegetable price, the overall price was 2.3 percent lower than a year ago. Total value of production of all principal fresh market vegetables and processing vegetables showed a 1.3 percent decrease, as the result of lower production combined with a lower season average price.

Vegetables for Fresh Market: There are 17 fresh market vegetables in the USDA-NASS, New Jersey Field Office estimating program. Area planted for these fresh market vegetables in 2007 totaled 33,700 acres with 32,500 acres harvested, compared with 33,800 acres planted in 2006 and 31,600 acres harvested. Production was 4.92 million hundredweight, an increase of 1.9 percent from the 4.83 million hundredweight produced in 2006. Overall yield in 2007 averaged 151 hundredweight per acre, down 2 hundredweight from the previous year. Season average price was \$26.10 per hundredweight compared with \$27.20 in 2006, a drop of \$1.10 per hundredweight.

Among the fresh market vegetables, cabbage, collards, cucumbers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash, and sweet corn had higher harvested acres in 2007 than in 2006. Harvested acres remained unchanged for asparagus, eggplant, escarole/endive, all lettuce, and tomatoes. Kale, bell peppers, snap beans, and spinach had lower harvested acres in 2007 than in 2006. The increase in harvested acres was enough to offset the decline of yield and resulted in a higher production level than a year ago. The value of production showed a decrease of \$2.95 million, as the result of a lower season average price. The 1.9 percent increase in total production did not offset the 4.0 percent decline of the season average price, resulting in a 2.2 percent reduction of total fresh market value compared with a year earlier.

Ranking New Jersey's fresh market vegetables by value of production, bell peppers ranked first with \$29.3 million, and tomatoes were second with \$23.6 million. Sweet corn, cucumbers, and cabbage were third, fourth, and fifth with \$15.1 million, \$11.5 million, and \$7.1 million, respectively.

Vegetables for Processing: In 2007, harvested acreage of the seven major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, snap beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) totaled 6,000 acres, compared with eight major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, snap beans, lima beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) of 7,500 acres in 2006. There were no lima bean acres contracted in 2007. Harvested acres increased for cucumbers and tomatoes. All other acreage declined. Total production, at 54,310 tons, was a 3 percent decrease from the 55,970 tons in 2006. The season average price was \$177.10 per ton, compared with \$151.70 per ton in 2006, up \$25.40 per ton. The 2007 value of production, at \$9.62 million, was up 13 percent from \$8.49 million in 2006.