

VEGETABLES 2008

2008 Vegetable Season: A mild winter, favorable weather in early spring, dry conditions in early summer followed by frequent thunderstorms in late summer, and wet weather in fall, all had varying effects on the vegetable crops this growing season. Planting and harvesting were started early, but the planting intentions were lower because of concerns about high rising fertilizer fuel costs. Yield and quality were generally good for spring vegetables. Summer planting was normal. Irrigation was needed for most of area due to the dry conditions. Frequent thunderstorms caused some crop loss. The tomato, peppers, and squash crop were hurt the most. Once entering the fall, frequent rains and lack of sun light has delayed pumpkin coloring and caused rot damage of squash crops. Despite some unfavorable conditions, it was still a good growing season for vegetable grows. Prices were high throughout the entire year. As the season concluded, production of asparagus, cabbage, eggplant, kale, all lettuce, bell peppers, pumpkins, snap beans, spinach, summer squash, and tomatoes were higher, while collards, cucumbers, winter squash, and sweet corn had lower production. Total value of production of all principal fresh market vegetables and processing vegetables showed a 20 percent and 17percent increase, respectively.

Vegetables for Fresh Market: There are 16 fresh market vegetables in the USDA-NASS, New Jersey Field Office estimating program. Area harvested for these vegetables in 2008 totaled 32,400 acres, declined 100 acres from 2007. Production amounted to 5.25 million hundredweight, an increase of 6.7 percent from the 4.92 million hundredweight produced in 2007. Overall yield in 2008 averaged 162

hundredweight per acre, up 11 hundredweight from the previous year. Season average price was \$29.40 per hundredweight compared with \$26.10 in 2007, up \$3.30 per hundredweight.

Among the fresh market vegetables, cabbage, kale, and all lettuce had higher harvested acres in 2008 than in 2007. Harvested acres remained unchanged for asparagus, collards, eggplant, escarole & endive, bell peppers, spinach, summer squash, winter squash, sweet corn, and tomatoes. Cucumbers, pumpkins, and snap beans had lower harvested acres in 2008 than in 2007. Despite harvested acreage was less than a year ago, higher yield resulted in a 7 percent higher total production. The value of production increased 20 percent as the result of higher season average prices and production.

Ranking New Jersey's fresh market vegetables by value of production, bell peppers were first with \$32.9 million, and tomatoes were second with \$26.6 million. Sweet corn, cucumbers, and summer squash were third, fourth, and fifth with \$15.5 million, \$13.1 million, and \$10.5 million, respectively.

Vegetables for Processing: In 2008, harvested acreage of the seven major processing vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, green peas, snap beans, spinach, sweet corn, and tomatoes) totaled 6,000 acres, unchanged from 2007. Harvested acres increased for carrots, snap beans, spinach, and sweet corn. Acreage declined for tomatoes, green peas, and cucumbers. Total production, at 58,740 tons, was an 8 percent increase from the 54,310 tons in 2007. The season average price was \$192.00 per ton, compared with \$177.10 per ton in 2007, up \$14.90 per ton. The 2008 value of production, at \$11.3 million, was up 17 percent from \$9.62 million in 2007.