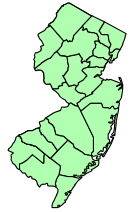




New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service

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We are pleased to present the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics 2004 edition. This publication is a cooperative effort between the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, and contains current statistics for New Jersey's \$846 million agricultural industry. Farmers will use the information found in this publication for their production planning and market decision making. The media, legislators, and educators need this data to develop sound agricultural policies and to help us promote New Jersey agricultural products.

The 2003 growing season was another challenging season for agricultural producers. Overall, the growing season was not very good. The season started out fairly well with a lack of any late widespread freezing temperatures or frost. Unlike the drought conditions in 2002, the largest drawback during the 2003 growing season was the heavy cloud cover and extremely damp conditions during late spring and early summer. June was an extremely wet month, with nearly twice the normal precipitation. The cooler than normal temperatures and heavy cloud cover during some of the critical growing months retarded the rate of maturation of many crops. Many of these crops also reached the market late in 2003. The conditions during most of the growing season resulted in a significant rot problem for some crops, as well as conditions that were very favorable for the spread of diseases.

Production rebounded for the apple, cranberry, and peach crops in 2003 from the 2002 season. Blueberry and strawberry producers received a better price for their crop in 2003, and in fact, enjoyed the highest season average price on record. The yield per acre also rebounded for the corn, hay, and soybeans crops in 2003, after the extremely hot and dry 2002 growing season. Barley, potatoes, and wheat, however, were estimated with lower yields per acre than in 2002. On average, barley, hay, soybeans, and sweet potato producers received significantly more money on average for their crops in 2003. Potato producers received significantly less for their crop in 2003 than in 2002. Many of the vegetable crops had another year of reduced yields per acre, but season average prices were either weaker or about the same as in 2002. Cattle, hog, honey, and egg prices, on average, were higher in 2003 than in 2002. The price was slightly lower for turkeys. On average, the price per hundredweight for calves was \$10 lower in 2003 than 2002.

When considering 2003 crop productions, New Jersey ranked in the top five nationally for a number of commodities. We ranked second nationally in cultivated blueberry production. Bell pepper production in New Jersey ranked third in the nation. New Jersey farmers ranked fourth in both cranberries and fresh market head lettuce production, and we ranked fifth in peach production.

The data in this publication was made possible by the voluntary cooperation of the New Jersey farmers and agribusinesses who responded to our surveys. We believe that the best source of agricultural data is from producers and agribusinesses. We would like to extend a genuine thank you to all those individuals who make New Jersey agricultural statistics data available to everyone.

The New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture are dedicated to serving the agricultural community. Please contact us any time with your questions, comments, and requests for information.