

VEGETABLES

2000 Vegetable Season: The mild winter, wet and warm early spring, unseasonably cool summer, and short fall had varying effects on vegetable crops this season. The spring planting started out about normal. Rainfall was above normal in early spring but averaged below normal in late spring. Cool weather during late May and early June extended the spring vegetable harvest, but slowed the summer crop progress. Temperatures averaged below normal for most of July and August. Topsoil moisture was below normal in central Jersey, while south Jersey's topsoil moisture was adequate. Growing conditions and quality of spring and summer vegetables were generally good. Fall planting and harvest was normal and the quality of crops was good. Compared with the 1999, total acres harvested of all principal vegetables increased only 2 percent, but total production and value of production showed a 44 percent and 58 percent increase, respectively.

Fresh Market Vegetables: Area harvested for the eleven principal fresh market vegetables in 2000 totaled 29,400 acres, compared with 29,100 acres in 1999; up 300 acres. Production amounted to 4,834,000 hundredweight, a 47 percent increase from the 3,298,000 hundredweights in 1999. Overall yield in 2000 averaged 164 hundredweight; up 45 percent from the previous year. Acres harvested for Romaine and other leaf lettuce, summer and winter squash, kale, collards, and pumpkins totaled 8,100; down 200 acres from 1999.

Among the eleven principal fresh market vegetables, all harvested acres declined or remained the same except sweet corn increased by 1,000 acres. The largest decline in acres harvested was spinach; down 300 acres. The total value of the eleven principal fresh market vegetables sharply increased 61 percent from 1999 as a result of favorable season average price combined with above average yields for most of the fresh market vegetables.

Ranking New Jersey's principal fresh market vegetables by value of production shows that tomatoes were first with \$30.0 million, bell peppers were second with \$29.2 million and sweet corn, cucumbers, and cabbage ranked third, fourth, and fifth with \$17.9 million, \$10.5 and \$8.6 million, respectively.

Processing Vegetables: Harvested acreage in 2000 of the eight major processing vegetables (tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, green peas, snap beans, lima beans, sweet corn, and spinach) totaled 10,450 acres, compared with 9,950 acres in 1999, up 5 percent. Spinach for processing was added to the estimate program in 2000. The harvested acres increased for tomatoes, but decreased or stayed the same for all other processing vegetables. Total production, at 77,230 tons, is a 37 percent increase from 56,500 tons in 1999. The season average price was \$122.50 per ton, compared with \$130.50 per ton in 1999; down 6 percent. The 1999 value of production at \$9.5 million was up 28 percent from \$7.4 million in 1999.