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THE VEGETABLE SITUATION

Summary

Practically all of the early southern vegetables show increased acreages or indicated increases in production for the 1938 season, reports the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Early spinach, lettuce, and carrots are exceptions, these crops showing a slight reduction compared with last season's outturn. It is apparent that southern vegetable crops are recovering rapidly from the freeze-damage which occurred in some sections early in the season, and it now seems likely that the spring markets will be abundantly supplied with truck crops of all kinds.

Since plantings of additional early crops have been reported, the total combined acreage of 16 early vegetables (not including potatoes) is now slightly greater than that of last season to date. The acreage figure now stands at 452,690, compared with 449,320 acres at the corresponding time last year and with a 5-year (1928-32) average of 340,050 acres.

Wholesale prices were somewhat irregular in mid-January. Considerably higher prices than in late December were reported for onions, old-crop cabbage, western cauliflower, Florida peppers, and Cuban cucumbers and lima beans. Prices of most other vegetables held about steady, or were lower than in December. The general trend of prices of these vegetables is usually downward with the approach of spring.

Prices of potatoes in nearly all markets have held very stable in recent weeks, while those of sweetpotatoes have shown a seasonal advance. Storage

supplies of both crops constitute the principal sources of current marketings, and holdings on January 1 were indicated to be somewhat larger than a year earlier.

POTATOES

Potato prices in all markets were very stable during the 4 weeks which ended with January 15. Wholesale prices at New York (excluding western potatoes) held near the level of \$1.20 per 100-pound sack, while those at Chicago were close to \$1.10. Prices of Idaho Russet Burbanks at New York averaged \$1.82 per 100-pound sack during the last 2 weeks of December and the first week of January, but rose to \$1.88 in the week ended January 15. At Chicago the weekly average for Russets varied between \$1.41 and \$1.44 per 100-pound bag, while Colorado McClures ranged between \$1.45 and \$1.47. Shipping-point prices also were very stable during the recent 4-weeks' period.

As usual when the late-potato crop is large, potato prices have shown little fluctuation since the latter part of October. The weekly averages of Idaho Russets at Chicago have varied between \$1.39 and \$1.47 per 100-pound sack from the early part of October to date. The averages of prices of midwestern varieties at Chicago have varied from \$1.06 to \$1.15 during the same period, while eastern potatoes at New York have fluctuated between \$1.13 and \$1.22 per 100 pounds.

Carlot shipments of late potatoes for the week ended January 22 totaled about 4,935 cars, or about 500 cars less than the preceding week and 1,700 cars above the output of the third week of January 1937. Shipments, by rail and boat, since January 1 totaled about 15,000 cars, which added to the 73,700 cars shipped prior to January 1 makes a season total to January 22 of nearly 90,000 cars. The size of the late crop would indicate that around 160,000 cars will be shipped by rail or boat during the entire 1937-38 season. It is indicated, therefore, that approximately 85,000 cars remained to be shipped after January 1. In 1935-36, when the late crop was similar in size to the present one a total of 83,000 cars was shipped after January 1. More information concerning the supplies available for marketing after January 1 will become available, when the Crop Reporting Board's report of stocks on hand January 1 is issued on January 28.

Carlot shipments of new-crop southern potatoes had reached only 90 cars in the week ended January 22, because of the relatively late opening of the Florida season. During the same week last year about 135 cars were shipped from the South. Florida and southern Texas will be about the only important sources of early potatoes until the Alabama and Louisiana crops start to move in April. Wholesale prices of new potatoes declined continuously in New York City since mid-December, and by January 15 they averaged around \$3.70 per 100 pounds on that market, or just about 3 times the price of old potatoes from eastern shipping areas.

Potatoes: Shipping point and terminal market prices per 100-pound sack, specified weeks, 1937-38

Location and variety	Week ended -				
	1937	1937-38			
	Jan. 16	Dec. 25	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
SHIPPING POINTS:					
F.o.b. usual terms-					
Grand Rapids, Mich. ..	2.16	.88	.92	.90	.90
Waupaca, Wis.	2.02	.79	.78	.78	.78
Presque Isle, Me.	2.18	.60	.64	.62	.62
Rochester, N.Y.	2.28	.87	.89	.90	.89
Yakima-Ellensburg district, Wash.	2.48	.75	.73	.74	.74
F.o.b. cash track-					
San Luis Valley, Colo.	2.42	.69	.72	.71	.71
Platte Valley, Nebr. ..	2.25	.59	.62	.64	.64
Idaho Falls, Idaho	2.45	.62	.65	.63	.61
Cash to growers-					
Waupaca, Wis.	1.70	.58	.58	.58	.58
Presque Isle, Me.	1.96	.46	.50	.49	.48
Rochester, N.Y.	1.92	.65	.63	.65	.63
Idaho Falls, Idaho	2.12	.42	.42	.44	.42
TERMINAL MARKETS:					
New York City-					
Excluding western potatoes	2.68	1.20	1.22	1.21	1.20
Idaho Russet Burbanks:	3.50	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.88
New potatoes	3.85	4.25	4.13	3.82	3.68
Chicago-					
Excluding western potatoes	2.32	1.07	1.11	1.10	1.09
Idaho Russet Burbanks:	3.21	1.41	1.44	1.44	1.41
Colo. Red McClures	3.24	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.45
New potatoes	4.31	3.83	<u>1/</u> 3.88	3.56	<u>1/4</u> 4.24

1/ Average for 2 days only.

Note: Platte Valley, Nebr., stock is quoted as "80% or better U. S. No. 1."

SWEETPOTATOES

Wholesale prices of sweetpotatoes rose seasonally during the 4 weeks ended January 15. The weekly average at New York City reached \$1.05 per bushel during the week ended January 1, but declined slightly to around \$1 the next 2 weeks. At Chicago, prices rose to an average of \$1.34 per bushel during Christmas week, but declined to \$1.26 by the second week of January.

Carlot shipments during early January ranged between 200 and 250 cars per week, with Louisiana, New Jersey, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Delaware supplying the bulk of the movement. To January 22, about 8,650 cars had been shipped by rail and boat from producing centers, compared with 8,215 cars shipped to the same time in the 1936-37 season and a total carlot movement of 11,340 cars for the entire season of 1936-37. Nearly 600 cars have been purchased and shipped for emergency relief purposes, during the current season.

TRUCK CROPS

SNAP BEANS: Early crop increased. The winter (or early) production of snap beans in Florida is indicated to be slightly over 2 million bushels, 17 percent more than were harvested last season, and more than twice as many as the 1928-32 average. With the exception of relatively small imports from Mexico, the only important source of snap beans for the winter market is Florida. Recent carlot shipments from the Florida fall crop were about one-third smaller than those of early January last year, but output was increasing and was expected to be quite heavy by February 1. The trend of wholesale prices has been downward since December, but in mid-January they were still considerably higher than those of a year earlier, when market supplies were larger.

BEETS: Larger supplies than last year. The early crop of beets in southern Texas is indicated to be 11 percent larger than was harvested last winter and spring. The crop of 324,000 bushels was moving to market in mid-January at the rate of 35 or 40 cars per week, and total movement to that time was fully twice as large as last season's output to the same date. City market prices declined continuously from mid-December to mid-January, and averaged slightly below the level of a year earlier.

CABBAGE: More early stock this year; old-crop prices advancing. The indicated production of early cabbage in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, and California combined is nearly 278,000 tons, or slightly more than the crop harvested last spring, and 32 percent above the 1928-32 average. This year's indicated production, however, is not so large as the exceptionally big crops of 1934 and 1936, when much of the early cabbage was left unharvested because of unfavorable market conditions. The Florida and Louisiana production is indicated to be considerably above that of last year, but the Texas crop may be 7 percent less than in 1937. The Texas crop, however, is indicated at 144,000 tons or more than half the total early crop.

In view of the relatively light production of late Danish-type cabbage last fall and the probable light storage stocks on January 1, it is likely that there will be a broad market outlet for the early southern crop. Carlot movement from Texas had reached 270 cars per week by mid-January, but the season is later than that of last year and total output to date has been one-third smaller. Florida was shipping 60 cars per week, California 90 cars weekly, and a light movement was reported from South Carolina and Arizona. Wholesale market prices held rather firm during the first half of January, around \$3 per 100 pounds, and were about 50 percent higher than prices a year earlier.

Old-crop cabbage was still moving from northern storage at the rate of nearly 225 cars per week, almost wholly from western New York. Market prices of this stock continued to advance, and reached about \$2 per 100 pounds in New York and Chicago by January 15. This is considerably above the price-level of January 1937.

CARROTS: Western supplies large; prices decline. California was shipping about 250 cars of carrots weekly by the middle of January; Arizona had decreased to 30 cars per week, and Texas was moving a few carloads. Market supplies in general were increasing, but were not quite so abundant as last season at the same time. The lettuce-crates of western bunched carrots were jobbing in terminal markets around \$2.50 by January 15 - a decline of about 30 cents since the end of December - and were 50 cents lower than a year ago. Production of early carrots in Arizona and Texas is indicated to be about 1,564,000 bushels, or nearly the same as last year. The California fall crop, however, was 15 percent larger than that of last season. Old-crop topped carrots from northern storage were wholesaling in city markets at only 45 to 80 cents per bushel, in mid-January.

CELERY: A record crop in early areas. Acreage and production of celery in Florida is indicated at about 12 percent over that of last year. Production is indicated to be equivalent to 2,352,000 crates of the so-called 2/3 size (around 90 pounds), or one-fourth greater than the 1928-32 average crop. The spring acreage in California also has been increased this season, and the indicated production of 1,220,000 crates is slightly above that of last spring and nearly double the 5-year average figure. In both these areas the celery crop is expected to exceed all previous records.

The Florida shipping season had become quite active by mid-January, though movement was late compared with last year. About 260 cars came from Florida during the week ended January 22; California shipped 340 cars that week. The western New York movement of storage stock had just about finished. Prices of both California and Florida celery declined rather sharply during the first half of January.

ONIONS: Texas early acreage large. The original intentions of onion growers in southern Texas have been exceeded, and plantings are now estimated at 24,500 acres, compared with 21,200 last year and a record of 31,000 acres in 1936. The indicated acreage is 30 percent above the 1928-32 average.

Louisiana growers report 1,610 acres and southern California 1,900 acres of early onions this year. The combined total in these States is 14 percent larger than that of last season. Condition of the crop in southern Texas improved greatly during December, and on January 1 at 81 percent of normal, was about the same as a year earlier. Movement to market is expected to begin somewhat later than usual. Only 84 sacks (100 pounds each) per acre were harvested last season in southern Texas, compared with a 10-year average of 99 sacks per acre. Market prices of old-crop onions have continued to advance since December. Yellow varieties were jobbing in mid-January around \$1.35 per 50-pound sack. Carlot shipments increased to 850 cars during the week ended January 15, but decreased to 620 cars the next week, chiefly from New York, Michigan, Colorado, and Idaho.

SHALLOTS: Larger crop indicated. These small bulbs, or onion-like plants, are grown commercially on about 5,700 acres in southeastern Louisiana. They are used as a bunched immature vegetable for eating as green onions, or sometimes in the dried matured form like garlic for flavoring purposes. The indicated yield this year is about 125 bushels per acre. A total crop of 712,000 bushels is expected, compared with 600,000 bushels last season. Express shipments in small lots are made from November to May. Peak movement this year is expected in late February or early March.

SPINACH: Early production reduced. The crop of spinach in four early States is indicated to be slightly more than 8 million bushels, nearly three-fourths of which is in southern Texas. This total would be 6 percent less than the production of last winter and spring, but 6 percent more than the 1928-32 average crop. Texas expects to have almost 6 million bushels, California a large crop of nearly 2 million bushels, besides very small quantities in Louisiana and South Carolina. Practically the only carlot movement (300 cars per week) in mid-January was from Texas, but the output this season has been only about two-thirds that of last season to date. Market prices held rather steady during late December and early January, but with an increase in arrivals, the Chicago wholesale price dropped sharply to about 80 cents per bushel on January 15, compared with \$1.10 in New York City. The indicated acreage of spinach for canning in California is reported as 10,470 acres, or 29 percent less than the acreage contracted in 1937. Actual harvestings in 1937, however, were considerably above the original contracted acreage. Nearly 43,000 tons of spinach were produced for canning in California last year.

TOMATOES: Florida plantings increased. Acreage of early tomatoes in southern Florida has been estimated at 19,200 acres, the largest in many years, compared with 17,200 last year and with only 11,000 acres in 1936. The average for 1928-32 was only about 11,900 acres. January 1 condition of the Florida crop was 67 percent of normal, 13 points below the condition a year earlier and 9 points below average. Last season about 94 bushels per acre were harvested in southern Florida. Shipments from Florida in mid-January were still light, but fairly large quantities were arriving from Cuba and Mexico. Cuban tomatoes were selling in city markets around \$2.25 per lug box. Mexican stock advanced sharply in price on the Chicago market about January 15, and for the first time this season exceeded the price of Cuban tomatoes.

Truck crops: Commercial acreage and production for market, average 1928-32, annual 1937, and indicated 1938

Commodity and group	Acreage			Unit	Production		
	Average:	1937	Prelim.:		Average:	1937	Indicated
	1928-32:	1937	1938		1928-32:	1937	1938
	Acres	Acres	Acres				
Asparagus 1/				:1,000			
Early.....	74,550	78,760	81,210	crates:	2/ 7,249	3/ 7,044	
Late.....	24,530	29,310	32,460	"	2,011	3,189	
Total.....	99,080	108,070	113,670	"	2/ 9,260	3/10,233	
Beans, snap				:1,000			
Fall.....	12,000	21,300	15,000	bu.	1,013	2,006	1,187
Early (1).....	9,660	28,900	30,000	"	936	1,792	2,100
Total 2 groups	21,660	50,200	45,000	"	1,949	3,798	3,287
Beets							
Early.....	4,710	4,800	6,100	"	830*	744	824
Cabbage 1/							
Fall.....	810	2,800	2,100	Tons	5,900	19,500	13,600
Early.....	37,560	58,200	54,100	"	211,000*	276,500*	277,800
Second-early..	13,810	18,600	#19,260	"	80,700*	97,500	
Total 3 groups	52,180	79,600	75,460	"	297,600*	393,500*	
Carrots				:1,000			
Fall.....	3,280	10,850	11,300	bu.	1,831	4,666	5,424
Early.....	8,470	9,000	9,800	"	1,840*	1,590	1,564
Total 2 groups	11,750	19,850	21,100	"	3,671*	6,256	6,988
Cauliflower				:1,000			
Fall & winter..	7,990	8,250	8,300	crates:	2,261	2,479	2,274
Celery							
Fall & winter..	7,180	10,300	9,700	"	1,240	1,700	1,843
Early.....	7,620	10,200	11,450	"	2,533	3,153	3,572
Total 2 groups	14,800	20,500	21,150	"	3,773	4,853	5,415
Cucumbers				:1,000			
Fall (Fla.)...	1,180	1,600	1,300	bu.	93	64	78
Eggplant							
Fall.....	1,170	1,350	1,450	"	210	245	256
Kale							
Fall & winter..	1,920	1,050	1,050	"	766	430	441
Lettuce				:1,000			
Early.....	49,740	35,200	39,200	crates:	5,821	5,109	4,701
Onions				:1,000			
Early.....	23,060	24,550	28,010	sacks:	2,308*	2,129*	
Peppers, green				:1,000			
Fall.....	2,010	3,600	4,500	bu.	406	640	765
Shallots(La.)...	---	6,000	5,700	"	---	600	712
Spinach							
Fall.....	2,940	3,000	2,700	"	888	945	878
Early.....	30,860	53,800	49,800	"	7,599*	8,542	8,044
Total 2 groups	33,800	56,800	52,500	"	8,487*	9,487	8,922
Tomatoes							
Fall.....	4,010	10,700	9,000	"	256	522	455
Early (1).....	10,990	17,200	19,200	"	1,218	1,617	
Total 2 groups	15,000	27,900	28,200	"	1,474	2,139	
Total to date..	340,050	449,320	452,690				

See footnotes on next page).

Footnotes for preceding table:

- 1/ Includes acreage and production for market and for manufacture.
2/ Includes 4,521,000 crates for canning.
3/ Includes 4,339,000 crates for canning.
* Includes some quantities not harvested on account of market conditions.
#/ Growers' intended acreage.

Truck crops: Wholesale prices at New York, averages for specified weeks, 1937-38

Commodity	Unit	Week ended -				
		1937	1937-38			
		Jan. 16:	Dec. 25:	Jan. 1:	Jan. 8:	Jan. 15
		Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
Beans, lima, Cuba	Bushel	2.75	2.19	2.17	2.25	3.29
Beans, snap, green, Fla.:	Bushel	1.80	2.91	2.85	2.19	2.42
Beets, new, Texas	$\frac{1}{2}$ letc. crt.	1.36	1.70	1.45	1.11	1.21
" , old, eastern ...	Bushel	.69	.40	.40	.42	.40
Broccoli, west & Texas.:	Crate	2.20	2.67	2.28	2.19	2.27
Cabbage, new, Fla. & Tex.:	100 pounds	2.05	3.40	2.92	2.66	3.27
" , old, Danish	100 pounds	1.00	1.62	1.84	1.96	2.02
Carrots, new, western ...	Letc. crt.	3.41	3.19	3.06	2.84	2.83
" , old, eastern ...	Bushel	.84	.79	.82	.82	.82
Cauliflower, Arizona ..	Pony crate	2.08	1.54	1.79	2.01	2.03
Celery, Calif. <u>1/</u>	$\frac{1}{2}$ crate	3.15	2.50	2.28	1.90	2.07
Cucumbers, fancy, Cuba.:	Bushel	2.16	2.46	2.17	2.25	4.31
Eggplant, fancy, Fla. .:	Crate	<u>2/</u> 1.35	3.42	3.32	2.88	3.12
Lettuce, Iceberg	4-5 dz. crt.	3.33	3.11	2.82	2.44	2.52
Onions, yellow	50-lb. sack	.62	1.25	1.25	1.33	1.46
" , Valencia	50-lb. sack	1.08	1.41	1.48	1.65	1.71
Peas, green, pole	Bushel	3.91	3.38	3.34	3.27	3.00
" " , other	Bushel	2.17	2.40	2.59	2.41	2.14
Peppers, fancy, Fla. .:	$1\frac{1}{2}$ -bu. crt.	1.71	3.25	3.30	3.30	3.75
Spinach, Tex. and Va. .:	Bushel	.84	1.17	1.15	1.26	1.12
Sweetpotatoes	Bushel	.99	.96	1.05	1.00	1.01
Tomatoes, Cuba <u>3/</u>	Lug box	2.35	2.62	2.12	2.25	2.31
Turnips, new	$\frac{1}{2}$ letc. crt. <u>4/</u>	.88	<u>4/</u> 1.50	1.21	1.08	1.42
" , old	Bushel	.45	.38	.38	.38	.38

1/ Includes green Pascal.

3/ Auction sales.

4/ Average for 1 day.

2/ Mostly fair to ordinary quality and condition.

Truck crops: Wholesale prices at Chicago, averages for specified weeks, 1937-38

Commodity	Unit	Week ended				
		1937		1937-38		
		Jan. 16:	Dec. 25:	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15
		Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.	Dol.
Beans, snap, green	Bushel	2.16	2.84	3.12	2.70	2.60
Beets, new, bunched	$\frac{1}{2}$ letc. crt.	1.07	1.39	1.24	1.04	1.04
" old, topped	Bushel	.44	.59	.60	.62	.62
Broccoli, Calif. & Tex.	Pony crate	1.95	1.88	1.90	1.88	1.75
Cabbage, new, domestic	100 pounds	1.92	2.75	2.80	2.83	2.80
" old, Danish	100 pounds	1.32	1.84	1.85	1.90	2.04
Carrots, western, bunch	Letc. crate	2.74	2.69	2.44	2.23	2.35
" old, topped	Bushel	.80	.38	.40	.40	.44
Cauliflower, Calif.	Pony crate	1.72	.92	1.11	1.32	1.58
" Arizona	Pony crate	---	1.41	1.74	1.94	1.94
Celery, Florida	16-in. crate	3.06	2.62	$\frac{1}{2}$ 2.62	2.36	2.24
" western	$\frac{1}{2}$ crate	2.86	2.38	2.17	2.03	1.80
Cucumbers, fancy, Cuba	Bushel	4.69	---	5.00	4.70	5.38
" fancy, Fla.	Bushel	5.18	4.25	$\frac{1}{4}$ 4.75	---	---
Eggplant, fancy	$1\frac{1}{2}$ -bu. crate	2.30	3.75	3.75	3.56	3.30
Lettuce, Iceberg	4-5 dz. crt.	3.02	2.51	2.36	2.20	2.24
Onions, yellow	50-lb. sack	.45	1.08	1.12	1.25	1.26
Peas, green, pole	Bushel	$\frac{1}{3}$ 3.50	3.07	3.17	3.13	3.16
Peppers, fancy, Fla.	$1\frac{1}{2}$ -bu. crt.	2.20	3.38	3.60	3.52	4.34
Spinach	Bushel	.71	1.22	1.06	1.17	.80
Sweetpotatoes	Bushel	1.64	1.34	1.31	1.32	1.26
Tomatoes, Cuba	Jug box	2.42	3.03	2.59	2.22	$\frac{2}{1}$ 1.98
" Mexico	Jug box	2.40	2.91	2.32	2.18	2.66
Turnips, new, Texas	$\frac{1}{2}$ letc. crt.	1.09	1.34	1.16	1.08	1.08
" old	Bushel	.58	.80	.76	.68	.78

 $\frac{1}{/}$ Average for 1 day. $\frac{2}{/}$ Override or poor condition.