

22-003

Published by Authority of the HON. W. D. EULER, M. P.
Minister of Trade and Commerce

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS - CANADA
AGRICULTURAL BRANCH

MAY 23 1936

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Vegetable Crop Report

Ottawa, May 22, 1936 - The Dominion Bureau of Statistics in co-operation with the Fruit Branch of the Department of Agriculture and the Provincial Departments of Agriculture issues to-day a report on the early vegetable situation in Canada.

Cool backward weather during the early spring has retarded the operations of vegetable growers in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia where most of the early crops are grown. Preparation of the land was delayed and crop planting held up accordingly. Abnormally high temperatures which prevailed during the early part of May forced growth along at a rapid rate and at the present time in most districts, crop development is normal.

Generally speaking, spring moisture conditions have been favorable for growth. From the middle of April onward, frequent showers coupled with warm weather have brought on the crops in British Columbia and at this date the growth is only slightly behind last year at the same period. Little or no frost damage has been experienced by the vegetable growers of that province to date.

In Ontario, the western portion of the province where most of the early vegetable production is centred has experienced favorable weather conditions during the early part of May. Moisture supplies have been adequate on the whole although the lighter soils of Norfolk and Essex counties would benefit from additional rains at this time.

Some damage is reported as a result of frosts which occurred on May 14-16. In the Niagara area, potatoes and beans were killed back and some tomato plants were damaged. Wentworth and Halton counties suffered injury to tomato plants but the damage was patchy. Top growth of potatoes was cut down and beans and peppers killed outright. Cauliflower is the only other crop showing injury. Growers in the area immediately surrounding Toronto were hard hit by the freeze of May 15 when considerable quantities of cabbage and cauliflower plants were damaged. In the case of cabbage, the net result will be to delay the maturity of the crop somewhat but much of the early cauliflower acreage in that district will have to be replanted as the plants were given a set back from which they are not likely to recover. Occasional instances of frost damage to early potatoes and other crops have been reported from scattered points in the district. Sand storms have caused some damage to onions in Elgin county as well as in Essex, Kent and Lambton and growers are replanting the damaged fields. About 300 acres were affected.

Increased acreages of most of the principal vegetable crops are being planted this season throughout the western part of Ontario. Most striking is the case of field tomatoes where it is estimated that the present season's acreage will show a 50 per cent increase over that of last year. Large areas of tomatoes are being grown on canners contracts this year and in the Niagara district, the area being planted for processing purposes is about 300 per cent greater than last year. Smaller increases are reported from the districts around Georgian Bay and Burlington as well as the counties of York and Peel.

Sweet corn promises to be a larger crop than last season with increased plantings reported from the Elgin, Oxford, Norfolk and Niagara areas.

Asparagus growers have increased their acreage this season to the extent of about 12 per cent over that of last year. Lettuce, radish and early celery will probably show small increases of about five per cent above the previous season.

The Niagara district is the only area which reports a decreased acreage of cauliflower. For western Ontario as a whole, an increased planting amounting to about eight per cent is reported, although this increase may be offset somewhat by the effects of frost damage.

While the counties of Norfolk, Middlesex and the districts around Georgian Bay and

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Niagara report increased plantings of early potatoes, for Western Ontario as a whole, a slight decrease is expected owing to the smaller acreage in other counties.

Little change from last year is expected with snap beans, carrots, beets, peas and spinach. Accurate estimates of the onion crop cannot be made at this date. Other vegetables show little indication of any change in acreage from last season.

In Eastern Ontario substantial increases in acreage of tomatoes for processing are being planted. This increase will be at least 50 per cent and possibly higher. Considerable damage was done to tomato plants by the frost of a week ago. In the Northumberland - Hastings - Prince Edward area, more than 3,000,000 plants were destroyed. These were practically all in cold frames. Where the plants were in green-houses they have come through safely and there will be plenty to supply the need in those areas. In other cases, growers have already sown fresh seed but the crop from these plants will be delayed. A number of growers have made arrangements to replace their losses by purchases of plants in the United States.

Early potatoes which were through the ground were frozen but will come on again. Beans were cut back and will have to be replanted wherever they were above ground. Peas also suffered considerable damage.

In the eastern end of the province and in the Ottawa district, the frost was sever enough to damage field rhubarb and practically all garden crops suffered heavily.

Apart from the frost damage, growth has been retarded by low temperatures which have prevailed throughout the past weeks with the exception of a few unseasonably warm days in early May.

In addition to the increase in tomato plantings, larger acreages of cabbages are reported from some districts, Frontenac county reporting a ten per cent increase with this crop.

British Columbia crops began moving to market early in the month and by May 15, asparagus and rhubarb shipping was at its height. Cannerys are taking large quantities of the former crop. Increased plantings of tomatoes are being made in different sections of the province, particularly throughout the Okanagan Valley. In the Lower Fraser Valley, early spring conditions made the sowing of vegetable crops difficult but transplanted crops have made excellent growth during recent weeks. A steady supply of local vegetables is expected by the first week of June. Growers have been encouraged by the favorable weather to make plantings of tomatoes rather earlier than usual and so far these have escaped frost injury.

Preliminary estimates of the vegetable acreages in the province as compiled by the provincial Department of Agriculture are as follows: Asparagus, 345 acres; beans 750 acres; cabbage, 410 acres; cauliflower, 125 acres; carrots, 460 acres; celery, 320 acres; corn, 560 acres; lettuce, 420 acres; onions, 1420 acres; peas, 3480 acres; tomatoes, 3075 acres; rhubarb 580 acres.

In Quebec the season is later. The Montreal area suffered severely from last week's freeze, a large number of tomato plants being killed in frames. Where asparagus stalks were well advanced, the frost cut them back. Lettuce and radish were also damaged. Any cabbage and cauliflower plants which were set out will have to be replaced. The district surrounding Quebec city has experienced mild weather with heavy showers and little sunshine. Frost damage was felt here, the temperature dropping to 20 degrees Fahr. on May 15-16. Transplanted lettuce and celery were injured and even tomato plants in hot beds were affected.



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