

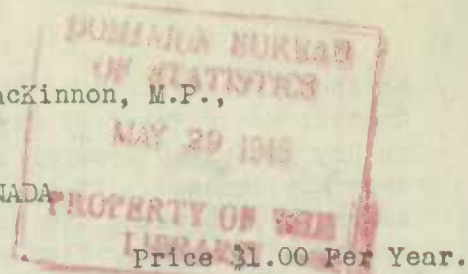
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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CROP REPORT

Ottawa, May ²⁹~~28~~, 194⁵~~4~~ - The Dominion Bureau of Statistics in cooperation with the Marketing Service of the Department of Agriculture and the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, issues today a report showing the condition of fruit and vegetable crops in the main producing areas.

SUMMARY

Cool, wet weather has prevailed for sometime in all the fruit producing areas throughout Canada and growth has been much retarded. The outlook for the 1945 tree fruit crops in British Columbia is bright, but in the other provinces adverse weather before and during the blooming period caused serious damage to the buds and the set of fruit is uncertain. The orchards blossomed heavily in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario, but severe frosts, coupled with prolonged cold, wet weather while the trees were in bloom, are thought to have greatly reduced the size of the crops. The prospects of the small fruits in Eastern Canada are brighter, but warm weather is required. In British Columbia the raspberry harvest is expected to be larger than in 1944, while all other small fruits should produce crops equal to those of a year ago.

The seeding and planting of vegetables has been delayed in all provinces and in some instances reseeding of crops already in the ground will be required. With the lateness of the season reduced acreages of vegetable crops are expected in some districts.

Prince Edward Island

Weather during the past winter was very favourable for the over-wintering of tree and small fruits. There was little sleet and practically no frost in the ground. Abundant snow covered the ground throughout the winter and no winter injury is reported. Late March and early April were unusually mild and warm and promoted early growth of both fruits and vegetables. Development during the latter part of April and early May has been greatly retarded with the change to cool weather. Fruit buds are developing slowly and only one spraying has been applied to date. A change to warmer weather would result in rapid development of the fruits. While there is no estimate of the probable harvest as yet, there is promise of average to above average crops.

Nova Scotia

The dry season of 1944 inhibited development of all fruit trees, resulting in limited growth and early maturity. Tree fruits, bush fruits, vines and plants came through the winter without injury. March weather was variable and the rainfall was below average. This was followed by two weeks of high temperatures in April when the fruit and leaf buds developed rapidly and early apple varieties were approaching the pre-pink stage by April 14, the earliest date in sixty years. Temperatures dropped suddenly on April 15 and reached a low of 10 degrees in some areas with 14 degrees being quite general. The resulting injury of the more advanced apple varieties, such as Crimson Beauty, Gravenstein, King of Tompkins, Ribston and Stark was generally severe, while in the centre of the Annapolis Valley the injury was disastrous. Orchards

on the higher levels of the North and South Mountains were less seriously affected. Another heavy frost on May 2nd injured fruit buds not already destroyed. The frost injury is fairly general and even orchards in the vicinity of Minas Basin were severely damaged. It is impossible to assess the effect on the apple crop at present as fruit buds which did not appear to have been damaged may not set fruit. Indications are that the cherry crop was completely wiped out. Plums and pears are still doubtful, but are likely to have been severely affected. Strawberry plantations are not as extensive nor as good as average; new plantings during 1944 suffered from the drought. It is reported that the frosts have injured the developing fruit buds and the crop is expected to be generally below average.

New Brunswick

Orchard and small fruit plantations wintered well throughout the province. Early spring temperatures were unusually high and development was ahead of normal. Due to the frequent rains and high winds, spraying operations have been considerably delayed. Frost injury to the fruit buds in the apple orchards is reported, but the extent of the damage is undetermined. During the mild weather in March and early April considerable planting of potatoes was begun in some districts, but with the continued wet, cold weather since the end of April further progress has been slow.

Quebec

The apple orchards in Quebec suffered no damage during the past winter. Snowfall was heavy and with the trees well matured last fall, the extremes of temperature during the winter months had little effect. Warm weather in March and early April brought the fruit buds along rapidly, with the result that severe injury was caused by heavy frosts during the latter part of April, particularly in the Abbotsford and Frelighsburg districts. Frost damage is now apparent and the Fameuse variety is expected to be exceedingly light. The weather turned cold and wet during April and May and growth has been greatly retarded. Some growers have not as yet applied the first spray and an outbreak of apple scab is feared. Because of the adverse weather during the blooming period, poor pollination may have resulted, but an accurate estimate of the probable crop is not yet possible. The earliest blossoms on the strawberry plantations were injured by frost, but the plants are growing rapidly and clear weather during the week-end of May 19-20 favoured pollination of the later blooms.

Hundreds of sash on hot beds and frames were broken during the violent windstorm of May 22, adding further to the difficulties of the vegetable growers. Continued wet weather has prevented seeding and crop work for the most part over the past four weeks. Early crops will be limited as a result. A few cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce have been transplanted, but most of the cauliflower has been frosted. The lettuce acreage will not be as large as last year and growth has been slow during the past four weeks. Limited supplies of field radish began to arrive on the market last week, but continued light supplies are expected.

Eastern Ontario

Fruit trees in this district of Ontario came through the winter in good condition, but due to the labour shortage and heavy snow, many orchardists were unable to do the usual amount of pruning. Unusually warm weather in March advanced the growth approximately one month ahead of normal and fruit buds were in the pre-pink stage during the second week of April. A heavy frost on the night of April 14 injured both fruit and leaf buds on the apple, plum, pear and cherry trees. Continued wet weather since that date has retarded further bud development resulting in weak bloom growth and dwarfed foliage on all fruit trees. Spraying has been difficult due to the weather and prolonged pre-bloom period. Considerable scab, as a result, is in evidence in the apple orchards. All varieties of apple trees with the exception of Spy are now in full bloom; fall and early winter varieties show medium to heavy loads of bloom, with McIntosh the most promising. Winter varieties are light to medium in most sections. Conditions for pollination, however, have been very poor to date. Pears are also in full bloom at present and most varieties are blossoming heavily. Damage from frost is severe in some sections and present weather conditions do not favour a good set of fruit.

Plums and cherries have been in bloom for two weeks. Here again the fruit buds have been damaged by frost and crop prospects are uncertain. Strawberry plants wintered well having made excellent growth last fall. All early blossoms were damaged by frost and some foliage was injured. Raspberry plantations also wintered well, but new growth has been retarded, during the past month, by frost and generally poor growing weather.

With the adverse weather little seeding of vegetables has been done since March, when a start was made. Work on the land has been practically at a standstill during the month and the seed that was planted will have to be reseeded. The present condition of the asparagus, cabbage, early onions, peas, spinach and tomatoes is below average. Beans, potatoes, cauliflower, carrots, celery, corn, lettuce and beets are all poor.

Western Ontario

Tree fruits wintered well throughout this district, except for a considerable amount of girdling by mice and rabbits. Unfavourable spring weather since the second week in April has slowed bud development. Frosts and the prolonged wet spell have caused damage which, so far, is undetermined. The vineyards show little injury to date except in some localized areas. The over-winter condition of small fruits except for some breakage due to heavy snow, was good. Spring frosts had an adverse effect upon currants and gooseberries, however. In spite of interrupted spraying operations practically no insects or disease damage is reported in the apple orchards. All districts report heavy bloom on all varieties, but due to injury caused by the backward weather it is impossible to indicate the probable harvest for the district as a whole. In Middlesex County, however, early apples were expected to be poor, fall varieties are poor to below average with winter varieties below average. In the Essex, Kent-Lambton district, early varieties will be poor, fall and winter varieties below average. In Brant County early and fall varieties are poor, while winter varieties are uncertain. In the Peel-York district all varieties with the exception of McIntosh are average. In the districts of Niagara, Burlington, Norfolk, Elgin, Oxford and Georgain Bay no indications are as yet possible. Plum and prune trees also carried heavy loads of bloom but due to prolonged unfavourable weather during the blossoming period and localized frost damage, no conclusion as to the size of the crop has been arrived at in the heaviest producing districts. Although the bloom on the cherry trees was heavy in all areas, weather conditions were unfavourable for pollination. Peach trees also bloomed abundantly, but it is still too early to estimate the effect of the damage caused by adverse weather. Strawberry plantations came through the winter in very good condition in most areas and the plants are making excellent growth. Here again the blossoms were affected by frost and the set of the fruit is uncertain. There was considerable increase in the number of plants since 1944 in the main producing districts and a crop equal to or slightly better than that of last year is possible. Raspberry canes, apart from some breakage and late frost damage, are in excellent condition and the present outlook is good. Grape vines also wintered well, but heavy snow delayed pruning until sprouting had started, with the result that considerable injury was caused. In the main-producing area of Niagara the present prospects are good.

Abnormally warm weather from March 17 to April 13 promoted considerable early planting of vegetables. Since that date cold wet weather, with frosts and high winds have retarded growth. Much reseeded will, therefore, be necessary. The present condition of practically all crops is poor to below average.

Manitoba

The past winter was not severe and bush and tree fruits came through in excellent condition. There appears to be little winter-killing. The crop prospects appear reasonably good except that the cold, backward spring has retarded leaf and blossom development, and these crops will be later than usual. With fine weather during the coming weeks, the outlook is better than average. The cold, backward spring has delayed the development of insect pests and fungous diseases.



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The seeding of vegetable crops has been delayed by the inclement weather and in some districts planting is just now getting underway. Some transplanting of such crops as head lettuce has taken place. Most of the onions are in the ground, as well as some of the other hardy vegetable crops, but the major portion of the seeding has yet to be done. There will, no doubt, be a decrease in acreage due to the lateness of the season, difficulty in planting and labour shortage. All vegetables currently offered here are imported with the exception of some locally grown potatoes.

Saskatchewan

The weather has been backward for garden work with frost at night and snow in several portions of the province. Some plantings have been made in the southern half of the province, a few in the central and west-central districts and practically none in the northern districts. The season is from two to three weeks later than usual. In the west-central district heavy frost occurred on May 16 and some early-seeded vegetables were frozen and reseeded will be required. Only hot house products are on the market. Generally speaking, the vegetable acreage will be about the same as usual, but in the Kelvington-Togo area large potato growers are reducing their acreages.

British Columbia

On the whole, climatic conditions during the spring up to the present have been variable and somewhat later than in 1944 in practically all district. There is plenty of soil moisture in all areas and in irrigation sections, snow in the hills indicate a satisfactory supply of irrigation water for the summer. Small fruit at the present appear satisfactory and favourable reports of the probable production have been received. Strawberries wintered well but the crop will be practically the same as a year ago. Raspberries on the other hand, will produce a heavier crop as no winter injury was sustained in any area. Loganberries, blackberries and other small fruits will produce crops of about the same size as last year. Stone fruits in the coast sections may be light due to cold weather during the blooming period. Indications are that in the Okanagan and Kootenay districts, the stone fruit crop will be as large, if not larger than that of the 1944 season. Apples and pears in the coast section may be light, but it is still too early to forecast the harvest. In the Okanagan and Kootenay districts the bloom in the apple and pear orchards was very heavy with the exception of Jonathan. The present indications are that the apple crop may be 20 per cent below that of the 1944 season. This, of course, is based entirely on the show of bloom.

It is still too early to give any information regarding the vegetable crops, but it is expected that the tomato acreage will be larger than a year ago, while potato and onion acreages will be about the same. Wet weather and frost have slowed up planting of tomatoes and other transplanted crops.