

22-003  
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

OTTAWA CANADA

Published by Authority of the Rt. Hon. J. D. Hogg, Minister of Trade and Commerce

F.V.R. No. 3.



June 5, 1954 Memorandum

Price: \$1.00 for 1954 series.

CONDITION OF FRUIT CROPS MAY 1954

SUMMARY

In practically all fruit growing areas the 1954 season is about one week later than that of 1953. In all provinces except British Columbia winter damage was very slight and any serious spring frost damage to buds and blossoms was local in nature. In British Columbia, however, unseasonable frosts at the end of April and the beginning of May caused considerable damage particularly to tender tree fruits in the Interior and some damage to strawberries at the Coast. The general outlook for Canada at the present time seems quite promising except in British Columbia where indications are that most tender tree fruit crops will be reduced and where apples and strawberries may show some adverse effects from frost damage. However, the 1954 fruit crops will still be subject to many hazards throughout the growing season and the present report should be interpreted as a general summary of conditions as they were at the time the reports were made and is not to be regarded as a crop forecast. Material in this release is based on reports made on crop conditions as of the middle of May for Ontario and British Columbia and the end of May for the Maritimes and Quebec.

Strawberries - Reports from most of the principal strawberry growing areas in central and eastern Canada indicate that plantings came through the winter of 1953-54 very well. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick strawberry plants were in bloom during the latter part of May. In Quebec strawberry fields wintered well and if suitable weather prevails a good crop is anticipated. In Ontario the development in the earlier districts was slow this spring but the plants showed little winter kill. In the section east of Toronto, however, plant population is reported to be somewhat low. In British Columbia frosts during April in the Lower Mainland, the most important strawberry growing area in the province, caused some injury to blossoms. It is expected that due to winter damage and heaving the British Columbia strawberry crop may be somewhat smaller than last year. Present preliminary indications therefore seem to indicate crops in eastern Canada at least as large as those in 1953 while in British Columbia some reduction may occur.

Raspberries - Throughout Ontario raspberry canes overwintered satisfactorily and rapid leafing out and good growth were reported by the middle of May. In British Columbia raspberries in the Lower Fraser Valley came through the winter in excellent condition and the present outlook is favourable. In Nova Scotia winter killing was reported but it is not expected to be more serious than usual. Quebec raspberry plantations are healthy and indications are favourable for this year's crop.

Cherries - All varieties of sweet cherries blossomed heavily in Ontario. Sour cherries had a prolonged bloom. Some frost damage was reported to both types. In British Columbia the cherry blossoms suffered considerable damage from the frosts encountered at the end of April and the beginning of May.

Other Tree Fruits - In all provinces of eastern Canada apples came through the winter in good condition with very little low temperature or other injury reported.

5502-555

3-6-54

Blossom in the Maritime Provinces was above average. The season, however, is somewhat later this year than last. In Quebec present prospects for apples are good in all districts. The blossom was heavy but pollination may have been only fair. In Ontario prospects as of the middle of May were for a heavy bloom. No frost damage was reported up until May 15th. In the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia apples sustained only a limited amount of frost damage this spring. There was, however, some variation in the amount of damage between the different varieties, with MacIntosh sustaining relatively light injury. In Quebec, eastern Ontario and British Columbia, MacIntosh apples are among the varieties showing the most promise this year.

#### MARITIME PROVINCES

In Prince Edward Island the acreage of strawberries for harvest this year is expected to be about the same as in 1953. Plantations wintered well and no frost damage was reported by the latter part of May. The fields are in good condition and crop prospects are favourable.

In Nova Scotia no winter killing of strawberries was reported, this being attributed to a more extensive use of mulch than in the previous year. Plantings were in bloom at the end of May with no frost damage reported at that time. Prospects were for an above average crop. Raspberries sustained some winter killing but this is not expected to be abnormally high and an average crop is anticipated. The blossom on plums is good and indications are generally favourable. Pear orchards appeared to be in good condition and all areas report an exceptionally heavy bloom.

The Nova Scotia apple orchards came through the winter in excellent condition. Some early frost injury to buds on the early varieties was reported from a few scattered localities but it was not felt that this will reduce yields. Although the blossom was not extremely heavy it was considered to be above average and was fairly consistent in all areas. The peak of bloom was expected to be reached by about June 2nd which is somewhat later than last year. Present indications seem favourable for apples this year.

In New Brunswick no change is anticipated in strawberry acreage from 1953. The plants were in bloom by the end of May and no frost damage was reported. At the present time conditions suggest an average yield. New Brunswick apple orchards escaped winter damage. The bloom was above average and no frost damage to blossoms was reported by the latter part of May. Full bloom was expected about June 2nd and general prospects are for a somewhat larger crop than that of 1953.

#### QUEBEC

In the province of Quebec strawberry fields have come through the winter in excellent condition and with suitable weather a good crop is expected. Raspberry plantations are healthy and the situation looks promising.

During the last weekend of May apple orchards in central Quebec were in blossom while those in lower Quebec were at the pre-bloom stage. For orchards in blossom the pollination period was reported to be only fair, the period of favourable weather having been somewhat limited. There was very little winter injury sustained and trees are in good health and making excellent growth. General prospects at the end of May for apples in Quebec were good.



### ONTARIO

Throughout Ontario both tree fruits and small fruits came through the winter with very little injury. The season was normal until April and early in May when cold, backward weather set in. This had delayed growth and the season was estimated to be at least one week later than in 1953.

Strawberries in western Ontario (the section of the province west of Toronto), where over 80 per cent of the crop is produced, wintered well but have developed slowly. By May 15th bloom in moderate volume was reported in Essex county with other areas being progressively later. In the counties east of Toronto strawberry plants generally wintered well and there appeared to be a very good show of bloom. Plant population of some sections, however, was somewhat low. Throughout the province raspberry canes overwintered satisfactorily and rapid leafing out was reported in the southern counties by the middle of May and good growth in the eastern areas. Sweet cherries were well past the peak of a heavy bloom on all varieties in the early areas by May 10th while in later districts the full bloom stage was reached by mid-May. Heavy frost damage was expected near London. Sour cherries had a prolonged bloom in western Ontario with the full stage reached by May 15th. Light frost damage was expected in Essex county. In eastern Ontario sour cherries came through the winter in good condition with no frost injury to May 15th. The prospects are for an average crop in this region which, however, accounts for only about 5 per cent of the Ontario sour cherry production.

Due to the low temperatures, peach orchards had a very prolonged blossom period reaching full bloom by May 15th in the early areas. There is some fear the pollination may have been poor due to the cool weather at this time. By the middle of May Japanese plums had finished petal-fall in the Niagara and Essex areas and other varieties showed a heavy bloom at full stage. The possibility of light damage from frost early in May was reported in the central counties. In eastern Ontario most plum varieties showed a patchy bloom while prunes were somewhat better but variable. Pear orchards were in full heavy bloom by May 15th in most areas of western Ontario. In eastern Ontario although pears appeared to have wintered well blossom prospects are varied.

Apple orchards were at the pink stage for early varieties in the southern counties of western Ontario while elsewhere later varieties were still undergoing delayed dormant sprays. The prospects were for a heavy bloom. In eastern Ontario warm weather during the latter part of April started an early growth and there was no frost damage up to May 15th. MacIntosh showed a heavy bud set throughout the district and it was predicted that they would be in full bloom by May 20th to 24th. Most of the other varieties showed a less promising set of buds.

Grapes in western Ontario were in good condition with trimming completed, tying nearly finished and buds just breaking at the middle of May.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

In the Lower Mainland area and on Vancouver Island the weather during the winter of 1953-54 was mild until about the middle of January when heavy snowfalls and low temperatures were encountered. Since the middle of February the weather has been cool and as a result growth has been slow.

The Lower Mainland ordinarily accounts for well over 90 per cent of British Columbia's strawberry production with the second most important area being Vancouver Island. Frosts during April in both these areas caused some damage to the strawberry



1010747121

blossoms. Plants were coming into bloom just after the middle of May and it is expected that picking will start about June 12th and become general by about June 20th, this being about at least one week later than last year. The crop may be somewhat smaller than in 1953 due to winter damage and heaving. Strawberries elsewhere in the province suffered some damage due to low winter temperatures and spring frosts. General conditions and crop prospects seem to be quite variable.

Raspberries in the Fraser Valley (where more than 90 per cent of the British Columbia crop is grown) came through the winter in excellent condition and the present outlook is favourable. Loganberries on Vancouver Island sustained some damage from frost in April. Blueberries in the western section of the Lower Fraser Valley are promising.

In the Okanagan Valley, the most important tree fruit producing section of British Columbia, unusually low temperatures were experienced during the last two days of April and the first two days of May. The thermometer dropped to 16° at East Kelowna on April 29th and to 22° at Summerland. This cold spell came at a time when apricots were just past full bloom and peaches were coming into bloom with cherries in the late pre-bloom stage. Apples and pears were in the pre-pink stage. Quantitative estimates of the damage inflicted are not available. In general it would appear that the effect was quite variable with some reports indicating that the damage was generally more severe to orchards on the flats than on the benches. Prunes seem to have withstood the frost better than most fruits. Reports covering the important soft fruit districts near Peachland, Summerland, Penticton and Naramata suggest that prunes, pears and apples may yield close to full crops, peaches and apricots will be down somewhat and cherries may be reduced considerably. The frost damage sustained by apples was limited, with Delicious and Stayman varieties the most severely affected. Blossom on the MacIntosh variety was heavy in some sections and frost damage to this variety limited.

In the fruit growing districts east of the Okanagan (the Kootenay and Arrow Lakes, Creston and Grand Forks sections) damage from the frosts late in April was limited since growth was not sufficiently far advanced by that time. Throughout the interior of British Columbia the season is about a week later this year than in 1953.

---

This report was prepared in the Agriculture Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from information received from the various Provincial Departments of Agriculture and the Canada Department of Agriculture. The material for Ontario was submitted by the Ontario Committee on Fruit and Vegetable Statistics.