

The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council
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WEEKLY Highbush BLUEBERRY CROP REPORT April 10, 2019

MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA – *Eric Stafne*: Fruit continues to develop and is sizing well. Looking forward the weather looks favorable, with highs in the upper 70s and low 80s and chances of periodic rain in the forecast. Botrytis has been somewhat of an issue after the freeze, but we are not expecting tremendous losses from that.

GEORGIA – *Alex Cornelius*: Georgia has had scattered rain this last week, not near as bad as forecasted. Most all areas are harvesting Georgia Dawn, Patricia, Rebel, Starr, Emerald and Farthing have lead berries turning Blue. Labor continues to be a problem with H2A workers being held up at the border. Packing facilities are struggling to get enough local labor to fill the needed positions in their facilities. Weather forecast looks really good for next week, with all farmers staying up on pick.

FLORIDA – *Bill Braswell*: South Florida is harvesting at full speed. All of the newer varieties have set good crops and are probably peaking this week. The heavy storms of the last couple of days has put a lot of the Kestrel variety on the ground. Hail has hit a couple farms hard in central and north Florida. The temperatures are forecasted to be moderate for the next couple of days but the highs are headed back to 90 degrees followed by another cool down. North Florida should come in on the heels of South Florida. The forecast there is for more of a steady flow with no hard peak starting in the week. Everyone agrees the Florida season will be over by May 1st. Fruit quality has been excellent. Labor and pests have not been an issue so far. USDA shows 6.2 million harvested through April 8th.

NORTH CAROLINA – *Neil Moore*: Bloom is moving along and will finish on most Highbush varieties in the next week with exception to Duke which is just starting bloom. Rabbiteye varieties are in full bloom. The weather has been good this week for fungicide and fertilizer applications. Pollination looks ok for now and crop size looks to be good but not a huge one. Harvest start still looks to be first week of May.

NEW JERSEY – *Denny Doyle*: New Jersey is at bud swell. Getting ready to apply fungicide sprays. Bees should be arriving around April 22.

INDIANA – *Pat Goin*: We are in a typical early spring weather pattern. Field work continues. We are in the bud swell stage. Crop looks to be good.

MICHIGAN – *Dave Trinka*: Cold temperatures keep the bushes at the dormant to early bud swell stage. Northern region may see snow Wednesday night and Thursday.

BRITISH COLUMBIA – *Anju Gill*: The wet and cooler weather has slowed down crop progression, however these conditions have created higher risk for mummy berry and anthracnose infections.

Blueberries

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Preventive measures continue, along with fertilizer/soil amendment applications. The earlier warm weather appears to have pushed Dukes along to extent of pink bud stage in some fields. If the weather had not cooled off, early bloom in this variety would have been possible in some areas. A burst of heat could change things. So far minor winter damage has been reported and crop looks healthy. Pollination will be critical in the coming weeks. The season is expected to be typical, with early-mid July harvest start, weather dependent.

WASHINGTON – *no report is available this week*

OREGON – *Doug Kraemer*: Oregon received substantial rain over the weekend, 3-6 inches. There has been minor flooding in some fields but affecting relatively small acreage. The water should recede by the end of the week. Bloom is moving along and there are bees being placed in fields. Lots of pink tip so a little heat will open blooms fast.

CALIFORNIA – *Todd Sanders*: The cool weather is delaying our harvest by an estimated 7 to 10 days. Once warmer weather begins, expect harvest to exhilarate rapidly. The USDA reported California shipped 330,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 3,430,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

MEXICO – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 46,020,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

CHILE - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 100,300,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Chile.

ARGENTINA - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 16,570,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Argentina.

PERU - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 51,740,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Peru.

URUGUAY - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 1,470,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Uruguay.

GUATEMALA - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 10th, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala