

# The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council  
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## WEEKLY Highbush BLUEBERRY CROP REPORT April 17, 2019

**MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA** – *report not available at this time:*

**GEORGIA** – *Alex Cornelius:* Georgia's highbush crop is moving along very rapidly. We have had beautiful weather conditions for the past week. Rain that is forecasted for Friday is of some concern but nothing major. There has been rumors of H2A's not coming through; however, at this time more have been released through the border and everyone is up on picking with help being adequate. No SWD being reported. The USDA is reporting 370,000 pounds of conventional and 10,000 pounds of organic for a total of 350,000 pounds shipped as of April 15.

**FLORIDA** – *Ken Patterson:* Florida is in full swing now with approximately 1,000,000 pounds per day being harvested. We have had a couple cool spells which has slowed the ripening process down. More cold weather is forecasted for Friday with temperatures in the 40's in the mornings which may curtail production curtail temporarily. The Central and South Florida regions are on the backside of their harvest. North Central Florida will be reaching their peak probably by the end of this week. Labor has not been an issue for the most part but that could change as Georgia ramps up production. With moderate temperatures through the harvest, quality has been excellent. Florida is currently 50 percent ahead of last years production and it could be its biggest harvest year ever. The USDA is reporting 11,516,929 pounds of conventional and 333,133 pounds of organic for a total of 11,850,062 pounds shipped as of April 15.

**NORTH CAROLINA** – *Neil Moore:* North Carolina has had good weather this past week to finish up bloom on all Highbush varieties except Duke. Duke is in 10-50 percent bloom depending on locations. Expect Duke to be in full bloom this coming week. Rabbiteye varieties are finishing bloom in the next week as well. Rainfall has been good across all growing areas and fertilization and insecticide sprays are being applied. Our crop size is still being estimated to be fair to good. Weather forecast looks favorable for the next week.

**NEW JERSEY** – *Denny Doyle:* New Jersey will be placing bees in the field starting this weekend in Atlantic county, Monday or Tuesday in Burlington county. Field operations are on going. Weather in New Jersey is typical...hot and cold, windy, wet and dry.

**INDIANA** – *Pat Goin:* Typical spring weather continues in our region. We have had several nice days in the 60's and then a cold front comes through and we have snow flurries and daytime highs in the 30's. Today's high is forecasted to be 75 degrees and Fridays high is forecasted to be 45. Several chances of rain are forecasted over the next week. Duke and Bluecrop are in the late green tip stage. Fungicides are being applied.

*Blueberries*

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**MICHIGAN** – *Dave Trinka*: Blueberry fields in west Michigan received 2-8 inches of snow on Sunday 4/14, but it all melted on Monday. We had few warm days during the last week, so growing degree day accumulation has been slow. We remain in an active storm track and expect more rain showers starting tonight and Thursday. Most soils are saturated. It does appear our temperatures will be normal to above normal for the upcoming week. Expect vegetative buds to begin showing green tissue within a day or two, but for now we are in a holding pattern with blueberry floral buds swollen and beginning to show some scale separation.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA** – *Anju Gill*: Cool and wet weather over last couple of weeks has slowed down crop development. Due to weather, spray applications have been challenging, nonetheless final mummy berry sprays are nearly complete. Other protective and fertilizer applications are underway. Most growers are ready to place bees, but some are holding off until enough bloom is open, could be another week or so. Minor winter injury has been reported in some fields. From the previous season, excess or late fertilizer applications may have led to late growth on some varieties (e.g. Bluecrop), potentially causing development of bacterial blight on soft shoots in some fields. So far, plants have a good set of flowers, Northland is showing better bloom this year. Season is expected to be normal with a possible delay of a week or so.

**WASHINGTON** – *Alan Schreiber*: In Eastern Washington most varieties are at tight cluster. Hard to say when bees will go in although some bees have already been put out. It is going to warm up this week and that is expected to speed development. Weather is forecasted for to have some days with highs in the seventies. First bloom in Duke will probably be seen in another 10 days or so. Seeing some winter damage on 2nd leaf Last Call. Western Washington has been cool and wet recently and plants are growing slowly. Seeing the first few blossoms in Duke, bees are starting to go in some fields. A field rep stated that there is a temporary shortage of bees, so it may be 7 to 10 days before significant bees are moved in to fields. No major problems with the overall blueberry crop. There is some winter injury but not enough to be a significant factor. Most early applications of fertilizer have been put on. Growers are applying on second or third mummy berry fungicide applications.

**OREGON** – *Doug Krahmer*: Oregon's crop is continuing to run later than last year by up to a week. Weather continues to be cool and wet, but bloom is getting started and bees are being placed. An update from last week's report, there was more flooding than anticipated last week, up to 1000 acres of blueberries have had some to a lot of flood water on them. No way to estimate the effects at this time and it may be difficult to know the total effects until harvest gets completed. Weather forecast is for a few dry and warmer days which are needed.

**CALIFORNIA** – *Todd Sanders*: California continues to be delayed in their harvest when compared to previous years. The California blueberry industry is running roughly 7-10 days behind due to cooler weather. The weather forecast looks to be warming up which should accelerate the California harvest. California is still anticipating a large crop with the peak date being roughly the third/fourth week in May. The USDA reported California shipped 450,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 3,470,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

**MEXICO** – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 16th, 2019 of 50,850,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

**CHILE** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 16th, 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 16th, 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 16th, 2019 of 51,790,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Peru.

**URUGUAY** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 16th, 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 16th, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala