

The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council
Committees Not for Publication • Not for Quotation

WEEKLY HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY CROP REPORT May 01, 2019

MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA – *Eric Stafne*: Summer has arrived in Mississippi with highs in the mid to upper 80s and lows in the upper 60s to low 70s. We could use some rain, but overall conditions are good. These temperatures will accelerate ripening. Right now, Southern Highbush are beginning to ripen though volumes will be light this year. There is still a lot of variability regarding crops on different Rabbit Eye varieties and locations, but overall what I am hearing is 60 percent loss on average expected this year.

GEORGIA – *Alex Cornelius*: Georgia's highbush harvest for the southern part of the state peaked over the weekend; with Alma, Baxley and the more Northern growing regions peaking this week. Weather has been beautiful for harvest conditions. Quality continues to be good. All highbush varieties are being harvested with Legacy starting this week. Prices have caused some farmers to turn to machine harvesting. The USDA is reporting 6,970,000 pounds of conventional and 220,000 pounds of organic for a total of 7,190,000 pounds shipped so far this season.

FLORIDA – *Ken Patterson*: Florida is quickly winding down their harvest for the year. With lower prices, quite a few growers have already stopped picking commercially with some going to U pick. There is quite a bit of labor leaving the area now and a few farms are being machine harvested for fresh. Florida should end their season by May 10th – 15th. As of April 29, the USDA is reporting 18,980,896 pounds of conventional and 545,375 pounds of organic for a total of 19,526,271 total pounds shipped so far this season.

NORTH CAROLINA – *Neil Moore*: North Carolina has had good weather for berry sizing. Warmer than normal temps and sunny dry days have growers irrigating prior to the season start. A small amount has been harvested on early ripening farms. Most farms will start harvest around May 10th. Crop size still looks to be average. Some varieties look good and some have some pollination problems.

NEW JERSEY – *Denny Doyle*: New Jersey is fifty percent pollinated at this time. Field operations are ongoing. We had some cold weather move into the state Monday morning. Growers reporting that they see no problems. At this time New Jersey should start around June 15th. Crop projection remains on target.

INDIANA – *Pat Goin*: Indiana has received 4.25 inches of rain in the last 4 days. It is forecasted for another inch before these front moves on late tomorrow. Some fields are flooded which will make fungicide sprays difficult. We are in the late pink bud stage.

Blueberries

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

1847 Iron Point Rd., Suite 100, Folsom, California 95630-8837 • (916) 983-2279
Fax (916) 983-9370 • E-mail: info@nabcblues.org • Web Site: www.nabcblues.org

MICHIGAN – *Dave Trinko*: There has been very little plant development during the past week. Average high temperature during the past week was 55 degrees, and most morning lows were in the 30's. Cool and wet remains the trend. Much of west Michigan has received 1.5-3.5 inches of liquid sunshine since Monday. We hope we can catch a break soon.

BRITISH COLUMBIA – *Anju Gill*: The cool weather conditions continue, stalling bloom development somewhat. There is sufficient bloom opening in Reka and Duke on a daily basis, but bee activity appears to be affected by the weather conditions. Weather forecast for the next week looks more encouraging and flower development should speed up considerably. Potentially, the delayed bloom opening could result in a concentrated and near simultaneous bloom period for most varieties which can prove to be a challenge for pollination. Harvest is expected to begin around first to second week of July

WASHINGTON – *Alan Schreiber*: The big story in Washington is that it is bloom time. Most varieties in the state are in the same growth stage in all locations. This is not a common occurrence. Despite the recent cold temperatures, the bees have been active. Pollination conditions are forecasted to be very good for the next two weeks and with bee supplies being adequate around the state it looks like Washington will have a very favorable pollination. Bloom seems heavy. There has been frost protection for the past few days, but it looks like going forward the forecast will be little or no cold temperatures. There is some winter injury in some locations in some varieties, such as Reka. Washington is about seven days behind, but the upcoming warm weather will allow us to catch up some.

OREGON – *Doug Kraemer*: Oregon is experiencing very good weather for pollination with the blues approaching full bloom. Bloom sprays and fertilizer continue to be applied with minimal disease visible. Vegetative growth is moving fast in this weather. Harvest still appears later than last year but weather like this could start narrowing the gap.

CALIFORNIA – *Todd Sanders*: The California blueberry season is progressing, albeit more slowly than anticipated. Originally, the Commission projected the peak harvest around the 2nd to 3rd week of May but we are now adjusting the peak harvest to be estimated at the 4th week of May and possibly the 1st week of June. One of the concerns right now, is that the blueberries may begin coming off all at once. This would add more pressure on the market which is compounded by the fact that Mexico blueberries are still being imported. The USDA reported California shipped 750,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 6,100,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far this season.

MEXICO – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 30rd, 2019 of 59,090,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

CHILE - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 30rd, 2019 of 100,330,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Chile.

ARGENTINA - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 30rd, 2019 of 16,580,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Argentina.

PERU - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 30rd, 2019 of 51,940,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Peru.

URUGUAY - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through April 30rd, 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 30rd, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala