

# The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council  
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## WEEKLY Highbush BLUEBERRY CROP REPORT June 05, 2019

**MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA** –*Eric Stafne*: The last three weeks have been unseasonably hot and dry with temperatures in the mid to upper 90's and no rain. Harvest conditions have been good, but some disease (anthracnose) and insect (cherry fruitworm) have caused problems. These are not usually a problem but the extensive rainfall in early-mid May led to missed sprays. Right now, the harvest is at its peak this week and next and early Rabbiteye cultivars like Alapaha and Premier are being finished while Brightwell is starting. It looks like our season will be finished by June 25 or so, which is about a week earlier than normal.

**GEORGIA** –*Alex Cornelius*: In Georgia we are in extreme drought conditions that continue to adversely affect our blueberry crop greatly. Some older farms have not updated their drip system and are showing plant damage in different parts of the field. An extremely high percent of everything is going fresh with very small amounts going into the process market. The weather forecast shows a high chance of rain in the next seven days. We are peaking this week for the Rabbiteye production. There is very little highbush left to harvest. Labor seems to adequate at this point in time. No signs of SWD. The USDA reported Georgia shipped 29,320,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 2,240,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

**FLORIDA** – *Florida's harvest is officially over.*

**NORTH CAROLINA** –*Neil Moore*: The very hot conditions have subsided to more normal temperatures this week. Some farms have received needed rainfall this past week while others are hoping for rain this weekend. Our forecast is for chances of rain this weekend and normal seasonal temperatures. All early varieties are finished for this season and mid-season varieties will finish this weekend. Legacy is the predominate variety being harvested now. Quality remains excellent but there are reports of smaller volumes of fruit than normal. Therefore, the crop may be smaller than originally anticipated. Labor has been an issue this season and farms are using machines to compensate for the labor shortages. The USDA reported North Carolina has shipped 12,710,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 30,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

**NEW JERSEY** –*Denny Doyle*: New Jersey will start this weekend with a light harvest. Volume will increase mid-week and should be peak harvest next week end for the duke variety. Growers are reporting labor seems to be coming this week end. I will have more on that next week. If the weather holds up, we should have a good start for the 2019 season.

**INDIANA** –*Pat Goin*: Bees are out of the fields and the berries are sizing nicely. We are heading into a drier pattern with the weather which will help dry out some of the fields. The crop looks to be good.

*Blueberries*

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

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**MICHIGAN** – *Dave Trinka*: Bloom continues in earnest. Early and mid-season varieties are finishing up in the south. Heavy bloom continuing further north in the state. We have had three days in a row without rain with temperatures conducive for bee activity. Looks like we will warm up later this week, but showers move back into the forecast. We remain about a week behind in plant development.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA** – *Anju Gill*: Warmer weather is advancing crop maturity. Disease pressure remains low; a few cases of fruit rot, aphid and leafroller have been reported. Protective sprays and fertilizer applications continue. Green fruit developing and sizing rapidly in the earlier varieties. Cooler weather is in the forecast, might slow down the crop development slightly. The crop looks excellent so far. Harvest is likely to start first week of July.

**WASHINGTON** – *Alan Schreiber*: In Eastern Washington first blue color was seen at the end of last week. Probably will have first harvest around June 15<sup>th</sup> with significant harvest starting around June 22. There are some reports of some hail damage. Whatcom County is projecting first fresh harvest at the end of June which is remarkably early. Significant fresh harvest will start around July 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> with machine harvesting for processing starting towards the end of July. Insecticide applications have been made for leafrollers, other worms and aphids. Skagit County will start harvest in earnest by July 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. The crop in Skagit looks good with the exception of Reka. Overall, the Washington crop ranges from pretty good to excellent. Northwest Washington is becoming relatively dry. Currently lack of rainfall is the only potential threat to the 2019 crop at this point.

**OREGON** – *Doug Krahmer*: Weather for sizing blueberries was excellent in the last week. The next 2-3 days are forecasted to be cool to below average temperatures with showers but turning back to sun and warm over the weekend. Now I sound like a weatherman, wow. Not much to report on the fruit side, they continue to size and a few coloring up. Growers getting their SWD programs set but still a little early to spray.

**CALIFORNIA** – *Todd Sanders*: California is now beginning to hit its peak which is roughly 10 days behind schedule. Recently, weather has been cool but beginning this week the temperatures in California are increasing with several 100+ degree days expected on the horizon. California anticipates a spike in the volume of blueberries harvested over the next 10 days. Unfortunately, labor has been more problematic than normal as the season is running into other commodities. The USDA reported California shipped 9,830,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 12,560,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

**MEXICO** – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 67,670,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

**CHILE** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 100,710,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Chile.

**ARGENTINA** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 19,190,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Argentina.

**PERU** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 67,660,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Peru.

**URUGUAY** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 1,500,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Uruguay.

**GUATEMALA** - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 4, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala