

The Council Letter

A Confidential Report to Directors, Members and Chairperson of Council
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WEEKLY Highbush Blueberry Crop Report

June 12, 2019

MISSISSIPPI/LOUISIANA – *Eric Stafne*: Crop still being harvested, and we are past the peak. Weather for harvest has been good, as the last dire rain event never materialized. We should be done in the next 10 days to 2 weeks. Starting to see some SWD. Bigger issues with Cranberry and Cherry fruitworm than usual.

GEORGIA – *Alex Cornelius*: Georgia has gotten much-needed relief from the heat and drought from the rain since last Thursday and Friday. The rain is certainly a help in the bushes and the condition of the plant, however, it is causing some problems with the quality of the berry. There has been more than 3 to 5 inches of rain in the past 24 hours. Is being recommended to most farmers to stay out of the field until dry conditions and sunlight occur before they clean up the busted berries in the field. The USDA reported Georgia shipped 32,970,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 2,350,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

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

NORTH CAROLINA – *Neil Moore*: Fresh harvest continues in North Carolina, Legacy is the main variety being harvested in addition to the early Rabbiteye varieties that have started harvest as well. Process volumes are down this season, growers are fresh packing all they can. Weather has been cool with scattered showers and storms this past week and forecast is for rain the next couple of days and dry and cooler than normal temps this weekend. Labor is leaving North Carolina for New Jersey this week and more to follow this weekend. Labor has been short in North Carolina this season. Some Farms report adequate labor this year and some have struggled all season for hand harvesters. The USDA reported North Carolina has shipped 17,520,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 50,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

NEW JERSEY – *Denny Doyle*: New Jersey has started its harvest; all growers are reporting good size and quality. Good demand also being reported. Labor on the other hand is another issue. Some growers are just ok, while others are very short, but are expecting crews to show up this week. Weather looks and is forecasted to be good after Thursday.

INDIANA – *Pat Goin*: The crop is looking good. We are anticipating a harvest date the week of June 24.

MICHIGAN – *Dave Trinka*: Bloom is ending in inland locations in the south. Lakeshore locations will remain in bloom for at least another week, and up to two more weeks in our northernmost fields. Fruit is sizing well on early and midseason varieties. A few berries may be picked starting 7/5, but very few. Most growers will not begin harvest until Weeks 28/29. We are currently 200 growing degree days behind 2018. Temperatures averaged a bit warmer last week and we finally made it to 80 degrees in some locales. More rain is forecast for Thursday and over the weekend. Berries should be large this season.

Blueberries

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BRITISH COLUMBIA - *Anju Gill*: We've had mix of cool to above average temperatures and sporadic rainfall, even an episode of hail. The heat this week might lead to some stress in fields that haven't kept with irrigation. Overall, the crop development has been very good. A bit of green fruit drop seen in Draper. Crop maturity continues to advance with first harvest expected within 2 weeks.

WASHINGTON – *Alan Schreiber*: Growing conditions continue to be favorable across the entire state, temperatures are pretty warm and conditions have been dry. Growers report expected yields to be flat to higher on established fields and increased production from younger fields. First fresh harvest in Washington will begin on June 17th with significant volumes picked by June 21-22 in eastern Washington. First processed harvest will begin around July 10 to July 15 with large volumes of processed blueberries coming by the end of July in western Washington.

OREGON – *Doug Kraemer*: Oregon is currently in a two day heat wave with temperatures coming in at 96-97 degrees. Don't expect any crop damage from the heat but I will let you know if we receive any. Still looking for harvest to begin the week of the 24th of June. I am seeing weakness in pollination of late season varieties and will keep an eye on how that comes out.

CALIFORNIA –No report available: The USDA reported California shipped 14,400,000 pounds of conventional fresh and 14,130,000 pounds of organic fresh blueberries this season so far.

MEXICO – The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 11, 2019 of 68,330,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Mexico.

CHILE - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 11, 2019 of 100,760,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Chile.

ARGENTINA - The USDA reported that the U.S. imported a total this season through June 11, 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 11, 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 11, 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 11, 2019 of 40,000 pounds of conventional fresh from Guatemala