



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –October 15, 2013  
compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension  
(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, [vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu](mailto:vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu)  
[www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry](http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry)

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westfield) This is the first time I have ever picked beans on the 8th of October; our first killing frost hit the next night. My first year in Vermont, 22 years ago, the killing frost was September 5. We are finishing harvest of the roots crops which are plentiful and in good condition. The greenhouses are seeded or transplanted for the winter; all that's left is to clean the fields and take a break! Overall the season was challenging with diseases, bugs, and too much early rain, but it ended up well and we had a good harvest. It sure is good to work with this nice, sunny, fall weather. Spring is now a distant memory.

(Royalton) We have still not had a frost. We're picking purple, yellow and Italian flat bush beans; the delicata and spaghetti squash are still flowering. Tomatoes in the field are done flowering, but the cherry tomatoes in the hoop house are still producing flowers and fruits. Harvesting fall beets with beautiful greens, Gilfeather turnips, head lettuces and spinach. Fall broccoli and cauliflower are heading up. The artichokes are producing well still. The furlough has made it possible for us to spend the extra time usually off the farm setting up our new 30 by 70 foot hoop house. Given the growing season this year, it seems like the only way we're going to regulate growing conditions will be with the help of these great additions. With these mild fall temps, I can't wait to see what the weed seed population is going to be like next year!

(Grand Isle) We have been pleased with Salanova as a baby lettuce. The high cost seems to be offset by the time saved in the labor of picking. We are enjoying the delay in the first hard killing frost. The fall bok choy and broccoli are as pretty as a picture, with no signs of problems. We are tackling the long list of pre winter projects: draining pumps, folding up shade cloths, pulling gladiola bulbs, getting winter squash in bins, picking up irrigation pipe before the weeds claim it, to name a few!

(Williston) Harvest is slowing down in the field. Will plant garlic/shallots this week and hope the weather will become more seasonable. We have not had a frost for couple of weeks. I do enjoy doing fall clean up with this balmy weather.

Things in the hoop house are looking great: kale, chard, scallions, cilantro and parsley. I had a bit of trouble with spinach and getting seeder to work correctly but went back and seeded by hand; will try transplanting some to fill in the gaps. Enjoying the slower pace, the foliage, and peace and quiet from the lack of F-16's. At least there is one plus from the government shut down!

(N. Ferrisburgh) Still picking fall raspberries around the SWD with good response from customers, when advised to discard soft fruit in picking row. Seems like the only good defense is getting ripe fruit off before larvae hatches. Cooler weather is showing a lot less pressure from SWD. I know other growers have closed their fields or cut down plants: no income instead of some income. SWD has probably accounted for 20% less income but some income is better than none. Sprayed twice when fly population exploded. We also have quite a few sugar pie pumpkins left if anyone needs some. Was pleased with our production numbers and size since we planted so late with all the rain. More than half cover cropped with winter rye and hoping to harvest straw next June for small baled mulch.

(Brunswick) Great season, after the June-July soakings. Early peas a disaster, then August peas the best! Latest pea sales here, ever. Hoophouse tomatoes outstanding, all varieties. Still selling; peppers also. Sweet corn sales just ending, Columbus Day weekend! Some late planting gambles almost into July paid off. We've been the sole seller of sweet corn for the last three weeks in the 'upper of the upper' Conn. Valley. Never had to irrigate sweet corn until one brief week in late August, first time pump was started all season. In 30 years of growing first-ever tomato hornworms appeared in August in fair numbers. Very few CPBs this year; used Bt only sparingly. We are eliminating Blue Gold potatoes in the mix for next season; flavor not up to standards here, skins seem to pucker after washing for presentation on farm stand. We are closing after Columbus Day, except for some phone orders from long term customers. Last winter rye seeding goes in now. No winter tunnel growing ventures here, time for woods work.

(Burlington) Holy broccoli! Haven't seen anything this nice out of our fields in more than 5 years. Sent a big load to the Food Venture Center for processing to see if our winter CSA members like frozen broccoli. Appreciating our farmer network; though we lost our onion crop in July flooding, we've been able to trade crops we have in abundance to make up much of our deficit for our winter share. Fall crops coming in and looking good. Pre-storage quality looking really good on most crops, though more fruit rots on the butternut than I hoped. Our storage crops are much nicer when we add humidity to the walk-in.

(New Haven) We are still in summer mode this week: tomatoes, cukes, zukes, peppers, eggplant, green and wax beans still producing well. Sweet corn is doing well we are picking bicolor and silver queen. Fall crops and winter roots doing well and on target. It's been a challenging year but the warm fall has helped make it an OK one.

(Sudbury) We are beginning to close down on what should be our finest season. The early rains got us started early and our new irrigation system filled in nicely when it began to dry out. The beautiful fall weather has kept our crops growing well with beds still full of lettuce, beans, carrots, beets, eggplants, peppers, kale, squash and even cucumbers. We've begun to till some beds under and will begin planting garlic next week. Then we cover it with straw as well as our carrots (planted in early August) which we will harvest later this fall and into winter. Diversifying our clients this year to include a farmers' market, CSA, local schools and restaurants has provided consistent demand that will continue well into November. We do not participate in winter markets; look forward to some time off and reviewing seed catalogs.

(Plainfield) The rutabagas, Napa, and late cabbage could use some rain as they try to finish up, but it is hard to complain too much about a mild, dry fall. Carmen peppers under row cover are still ripening beautiful reds. Not enough frost to even slightly damage our big chard planting. Kale is growing well, barely keeping up with demand. Very weak yield on winter squash, mostly sold already. Best fall raspberry crop, and still no frost in the forecast. Tearing cherry tomatoes and peppers out of the greenhouses, tilling in compost, and planting spinach plugs.

(Middle Granville NY) Season is wrapping up rather well. About two thirds of the way through fall harvesting. Carrots, leeks, radishes, and rutabaga left. Having more disease in the brassicas than normal although the plants are still putting up amazing heads; best cauliflower and broccoli ever. Winter radishes and turnips had serious aphids, to the point that the plants died because we covered with rowcover to keep root maggot off. We did spray Pyganic but didn't make a dent. Spinach and greens are gorgeous, took a bit of a hit to some seedlings with the very heavy rain a month or so ago. Markets are down; our big market has 30 veggie growers and we are really feeling the competition. We have the most variety and best prices in several years and sales are still down. Root cellar is filling up fast, wholesale is pretty strong, and the carrot and beet harvester we bought earlier has already paid for itself. Crew is dwindling, having to put in more hours than want to and conference season is starting in a few weeks!

(Little Compton RI) Bringing in fall and winter storage crops ahead of schedule (first time!). Our potato crops most limiting factor is our poor hilling technique. We are building a special hilling unit that will finally get this done right. We figure we can double our fingerling crop by hilling them a fourth time. We are hoping to use this on our leeks as well. All the European YouTube videos show their leeks all growing in hills. Speaking of leeks Megaton is our best grower and seller; expensive seed but worth every penny. We got our Watermelon radishes in the ground on August 8 and they are tennis ball size now and ready for the winter cooler. CSA winter signup has been weaker than last year. We are separating the mid-winter (Nov 1-Dec 31) CSA from the Deep Winter CSA (Jan-mid April) to see if that is more appealing to our customers. It also gives us an out if we are too low in storage product in January.

(Plainfield NH) No frost yet, second planting of plums and cherry tomatoes still giving forth, but ripeness, flavor are not the same without the long days and heat. Raspberries still holding up-our workhorses are Caroline and Jaclyn. Finished potatoes later than hoped for, and although it's pretty late, opted to try a vetch rye cover at double rate in a gamble to establish for spring after we cleaned out the field. Closing the farm stand today and start CSA on Thursday which lasts until Thanksgiving, and will continue to move root crops and brassicas wherever. Lots of machinery piled in front of the shop and the list of fall chores looks pretty onerous. Excellent weather has helped sales as well the fall harvest. I am not sure the end result will put us into the plus column of the ledger, but it certainly helped after a really miserable mid-summer.

(Argyle NY) The beautiful autumn weather has been a blessing to push fall crops, get cover crops planted and harvest crops for the root cellar in T-shirts! We had low yields on sweet potatoes due to the late planting of the slips (delay from the grower) and the weather, but they look nice. Cabbage, kohlrabi, turnip (3 kinds), and carrot crops all look great. Still no frost so we are picking the last of the beans, corn, summer squash and cucumbers. Fall spinach is looking good with some mite damage; unusual for fall spinach. Fall lettuce is fantastic and we hope the markets keep up with production as we move inside for winter markets in a few weeks. Most of the 3 high tunnels are seeded or planted; salad mix greens and mustards germinated and on their way to being sold in late December or early January. We are doing successive arugula seedings and will transplant the last of the spinach plants when we rip out the tomatoes that continue to amaze us with good production. Preparation is underway for a busy winter schedule of conferences with our first to ACORN in Nova Scotia Nov 20; we will visit a bunch of farms while there, which is always a great learning experience.

## COMMENTING ON FSMA PRODUCE RULES MADE EASY – webinar Nov. 4 at noon

The deadline for making comments on the Food Safety Modernization Act proposed rules is November 15. When finalized, these rules will affect many Vermont vegetable and fruit growers, large and small. Even if your farm falls in an ‘exempt’ category we anticipate these rules will influence standards for what the marketplace expects of all growers. UVM Extension, NOFA-Vermont and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture are hosting a webinar on November 4 from noon to 1 pm that will go over the elements of a strong comment, give examples of talking points for different types of farms, identify alternatives to the proposed rules, and walk you through how to submit comments on-line. Space is limited; register at:

<https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/173761087>.

The webinar will not explain the details of FSMA, it will focus on how to comment. Please prepare ahead of time by getting familiar with the proposed rules; here are some resources: UNH FSMA website:

<http://extension.unh.edu/Food-Safety-Modernization-Act-FSMA>

Factsheet by Vern Grubinger:

[http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Understanding\\_FSMA\\_Rule.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Understanding_FSMA_Rule.pdf)

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website:

<http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/>

American Farmland Trust webinar (takes a couple minutes to load):

<http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/ma/Food-Safety-Modernization-Act.asp>

Questions? [virginia.nickerson@uvm.edu](mailto:virginia.nickerson@uvm.edu), UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

## FARMS IN FLOODPLAIN - QUICK SURVEY

UVM Extension, NOFA VT and West Virginia University are developing programs to help farms in floodplains stay resilient. We are interested in whether planting woody crops that can be harvested might reduce flood risk and we need to gauge your interest in this. Please take a 5 minute confidential survey on the challenges and needs related to farming in floodplains. Survey ends Oct. 18, go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GW2JP79>.