



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –October 28, 2019
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Grand Isle) This has been the best fall ever for vegetable crops. All the cole crops have been very good. Other than losing all of our onions to bacterial bulb rot, it has also been a very good growing season for everything else.

About a week ago we went out at 7 am as we always do to harvest broccoli, every other day. The night before was cool but no frost. It was around 35 degrees when we started harvesting. Lots of the broccoli had darker shades of green mottling on the head, which looked very much like the beginning of head rot. We decided to just pick heads which had no mottling, and I put 2 heads with symptoms on the dash of my truck, to send to the UVM plant diagnostic lab later. It was sunny that morning, and around 9 am I went to open up the truck which had warmed up due to the sun. To my utter surprise, the alternating dark shades of green mottling were GONE! The broccoli heads looked perfectly normal! So we went back to the field and lo and behold all the broccoli that had mottling now looked normal! So we harvested those heads also, and kept a close eye on them in the cooler (38 degrees F) and they never had any problems. We have been growing broccoli since 1980 and I don't remember ever having this phenomenon before. On the other hand, my memory isn't what it used to be either. Anyway I thought it was worth mentioning.

(Charlotte) This is our last weekend open to the public. I have gotten 90 percent of the black raspberry fields cleaned up for next year. During last week's storm a few trees fell in the blueberries. We are cutting them and will mulch what we can. Mulched about 50 percent of the blueberries so far, but now it is too wet to get the tractor and mulcher into the field. Blackberries didn't produce very well this year. We are thinking what we are going to replace them with.

(Westminster West) Last outdoor farmers' market was Oct. 26, next week we start at the indoor market which is new for us. Farmers' market sales have been excellent this year, helped in part by very cooperative weather. I don't think we had a bad rain day all season.

Few field crops left: carrots, turnips, leeks. Massive carrots and turnip crop this year, optimum weather conditions. Still picking good amount of tomatoes from the tunnel. Grafted Big Denas just won't quit! Sales in general have been strong. Shipped last of onions yesterday, garlic gone, some types of winter squash gone. Already analyzing financial results per crop, which crops break even, which crops actually make money, interesting data!

Ordering hemp seeds for next year already. This fascinating crop was well worth the effort we put in. Our genetics proved their worth this year for us and our customers, happy growers!

Last of the garlic goes in today, always good to get that done before it snows here. I received a letter from a friend that helped me plant garlic here back in the early 70s. Made me wonder how many more years I will continue. Have a great fall, time to get the firewood in!

(Brookfield) Many frosts, lettuce, Napa, kale, carrots spinach, bushels all still good. Lowest temp 24 degrees.

(Rochester) A killing frost of 28° F. or maybe lower on October 4 brought the fall raspberry picking to a close. Too bad, because there was a lot fruit still to ripen and we did not get another night below freezing for the following two weeks. We shouldn't be surprised because really it could happen even in September but we have been getting through to Indigenous People's Day in recent years and sometimes well beyond. We got winter rye sown by mid-October which we think is in time enough to germinate and give us good growth to till under come May or June. Outdoor markets have finished now so we have a little extra time to attend to fall tasks. Love the way fall is stretching out into November with fresh, damp mornings and a relatively unhurried pace.

(Dummerston) It's been a great growing season overall. Hot dry weather made for plentiful harvests. Even the high tunnel tomatoes that had been covered with leaf mold in August pulled through and did well into October. Our unresolved pest and disease problems that continue to come back every year, however, are Cercospora on chard, basil downy mildew, cabbage root maggot (in turnips and rutabagas), and cabbage aphids.

My biggest goal to improve things for next year is to find and retain reliable, full-time help. There were too many people coming and going throughout the season or not showing up reliably. I'm having to increase prices to do this but I'm hopeful that it will work out.

In the field right now we're working on harvesting carrots for storage. Haven't even gotten around to digging the first parsnips yet. Lots of leeks. Nice cabbage and Brussels sprouts when we can avoid the aphids.

In the high tunnels, winter greens are off to a pretty good start. Some cutworms in the bok choy and a little downy mildew in the kale already. I was a little slow to get the slugs under control so dealing with some holey outer leaves.

I'm happy to be wrapping up the regular season CSA and looking forward to the slower pace of the winter CSA and winter farmers' market.

(Elmore) Persimmons ripening in the high tunnels. Planting very hardy peaches and pine nuts inside for better control of irrigation and warmth for germinating and less weed pressure. Large black walnut and hazelnut crops this year. Largest harvest of northern kiwiberry to date. Grapes galore and pears and apples covering the ground so you can't walk.

Stores not responding to calls or emails even for things they advertise they need. Working with Farmers To You, it is a good solid place to work with! Planting out more fruit trees we have wanted to grow this fall such as medlar, apricots and more plums. Planning on growing more of what is easiest for us and less of what is not so fruitful. Some things are not economical, these we do for love.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Ending up a good season so far. July and August drought did not affect yield of field vegetable and I was able to get good "primeur" on these. Sweet potato yield are ok but I still have to work on some aspects of production, essentially transplants quality. You could really see the difference as some plants had great yields and some other none. Greenhouses are full, waiting for the price to go up and so far acclimation to colder temperature is smooth. Hoping for a mild winter with lots of snow.

(Argyle NY) It's been a great year for us with most of our 35+ crops doing well. Overwintered onions in the field had some loss for the first time, and also we lost over 50% of our garlic due to very strange spring rains/frozen ground. Farmers' markets sales have been strong, will be up 10-15% in sales, but we also added almost an acre of production. Last winter's farmers' market was our second highest gross since 2011, and we hope for busy winter markets again.

Warm autumn weather has led to great yields on all fall storage crops, which we harvest weekly and get packed away in the root cellar. Still to go are turnips, rutabagas, winter radishes, a few beets, kohlrabis, and many tons of carrots. The rains cause some harvest concerns, so we use tarps to keep areas dry to be able to get equipment on the fields to harvest. Works well for us.

Many acres were seeded to rye/vetch cover crop in late September and they are nice and green. Garlic was planted October 15 and the overwintered onions, both Forum sets and greenhouse seeded varieties, are to be planted asap. Our 3 high tunnels are completely planted now, with the last spinach transplants going in this past week. Growth on the chard, kale, Asian Greens, herbs, salad mixes, Salanova lettuce, in the tunnels has been impressive with the warm weather. We will monitor night temperatures as they drop, to avoid damage on fleshy growth, and work to harden crops off well. There are some minor field diseases like downy mildew on romaine lettuce, Alternaria on cabbage, and Cercospora on chard, but overall, fantastic yields. Could use a few more hands to finish the long list of tasks, build temporary tunnels over crops, split wood etc. before winter sets in.

(Little Compton RI) The last Nor'easter in southern New England ripped the plastic off two of our greenhouses. Yes, the plastic was 2 to 3 years old, but the real problem was the wiggle wire. A couple of years ago, we were changing some greenhouse plastic and had to undo long runs of

wiggle wire off a 148' side wall. When our crew started, I heard a popping sound and saw, rather than unwigging to reverse the process of inserting the wiggle wire, they had decided it was quicker to remove it with one quick pull. At the time, I thought to reward them for their ingenuity! But later, as we were reinstalling the wiggle wire on the new plastic, I noticed it had not retained its normal shape and tension—it was damaged and not to be trusted in high stress points. This problem was added to by the lack of second wiggle wire when the high winds came. In high stress points of plastic attachment, it is crucial to use double wiggle wire. Our plastic failure happened right along the single wiggle wire attachment, where you could see the zipper like stress points from the single wiggle wire use.

Fall harvest is going well, potatoes did so well we don't know where to store them! Thumbs up on downy mildew resistant basil last summer. Our high hopes for the 'Trident' organic B.t. for use on CPB was a dismal failure and forced us to pull Entrust back into service. Trident worked incredibly well in 2018 but I hear production problems and shelf stability has made the company throw in the towel.

Had a season to fall in love with out interseeder high clearance grain drill. What a great machine and seeing the mature cover crops actively growing under the cash crops like broccoli, cauliflower, kale, etc. is too exciting to express. In years past these very late crops were difficult to cover crop without acres of hand work and even then, because it was only surface application, the stand we got was mediocre at best.

We are behind getting winter crops in tunnels but having started them as plugs three weeks ago, we hope to catch up come harvest in January. Steaming beds for chick weed and other pathogens is almost done. After two years learn curve is almost complete.

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR THE NEW ENGLAND VEGETABLE AND FRUIT CONCERENCE IN MANCHESTER NH DEC. 10-12

Pre-registration rates end Nov. 29, <https://newenglandvfc.org/>

PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE (PSA) TRAINING

Monday, Dec. 9, 2019, 8 am-5 pm, Doubletree Hotel, 700 Elm St, Manchester, NH
(One day before the New England Veg and Fruit Conference, at the same venue.)

This training is for fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety. This training satisfies the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement for covered farms that "at least one supervisor or responsible party" completes "food safety training...recognized as adequate" by FDA. Fee of \$20 includes meals, course materials and certificate. To register, [click here](#). For more information, to request a disability-related accommodation, or to note any dietary restrictions. Email virginia.jaquish@uvm.edu, or call (802) 751-8307 x351.

WPS MATERIALS AVAILABLE ON THUMB DRIVE

All commercial growers that apply (conventional or organic) pesticides need to train their workers to be in compliance with the Worker Protection Standards. The Pesticides Educational Resource collaborative (PERC) led by UC Davis Extension and Oregon State Univ. has collected WPS-related tools and resources on a thumb drive, available for \$99 plus shipping. The VT Agency of Agriculture can provide you with many of these resources for free, but they also endorse this product as a comprehensive long-term reference that includes WPS: Pesticide Safety Training Videos, Ag Employer Handbook, Worker Training Flip Charts and Posters in multiple languages, How-to-Comply Manual, Respiratory Protection Guide, Training Power points, and A Manual for Trainers. Questions? Annie Macmillan, Pesticide Certification and Training Coordinator, VAAF, 802.828.3479 or Anne.Macmillan@vermont.gov. Order at: <https://npsecstore.com/collections/wps-resources-mega-thumb-drive>

VERMONT FAMILY FARMER OF THE MONTH AWARDS

Applications are open for The Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Award which provides funds to a Vermont family farmer each month for a project that will improve the viability of the farm. Awards recognize farmers whose businesses are contributing to a resilient Vermont agricultural landscape and demonstrate environmental stewardship through sustainable practices. Applications are due by Nov. 30 for January, February, and March awards. Learn more and apply at vermontfamilyfarmeraward.org

NOFA-VT JOURNEY FARMER PROGRAM

Applications are being accepted for 2020 for this two-year program that enables new farmers to advance their farming skills and experiences while being part of a learning community of other beginning farmers and farmer mentors. Journey Farmers receive access to NOFA-VT's Farm Beginnings classes, farmer-to-farmer mentoring, \$500 educational stipend, free admission to NOFA-VT Winter Conference and On-Farm Workshops, business planning support and technical assistance, and access to the Journey Farmer Network. Applications are due Nov. 15. To learn more and apply, visit: <https://nofavt.org/journey-farmer>

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

November 6, 2-5 pm. Off the grid, small-scale diversified vegetables and reduced tillage at Small Axe Farm, Barnet. VVBGA members free, \$10 others.

November 19, 9am-2pm. Washing Machine Greens Spinner Workshop. VTC, Randolph Technical Career Center.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecO2WtjXaT9veu9wMhXIU5tqyCf_0NiHYrUVYupWDtEN-M6A/viewform

December 10-12. New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference and Trade Show. Manchester NH. <https://newenglandvfc.org/>

January 27, 2020. VVBGA Annual Meeting, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee.