



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – October 4, 2016
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster West) Hectic time of year getting crops in and shipping out! Our first year growing sweet potatoes was successful and I plan on expanding quite a bit. Set out our first planting of strawberry plugs for next spring picking, excited by new crops. Fall carrots, beets, turnips and leeks look real nice and sales are picking up weekly with cooler weather. Still picking tunnel tomatoes as well as raspberries. Finished running onions thru topper and sales are good. Squash backed up a bit but hopefully they will pick up. Fields limed and seeded to winter rye, getting too late for oats and peas. Garlic going in soon. Staff attrition taking its toll.

(Berlin) Perfect Circle Farm. Working hard to get the fall berry plantings in the ground and the container nursery all ready for winter, perfect weather for this. Will not be overwintering as many plants in containers above ground as the lack of snow last year caused massive losses. I have a great idea now which plants can survive low snow conditions in pots. The drought was difficult to go through, we had to drill a well as the brook we irrigate the container nursery from ran dry in June. In the field we were lucky as our Cabot soils hold water, and establishment and growth on the shrubs and trees was good. Finally able to get the compost program kicked in, beautiful manure from Pete and Jerry's. Next step is deer management, as they are pounding the bush cherries and seaberries pretty hard. Been hesitant to line out the apple trees until I figure that system out. Our seed crop of industrial hemp did very well, and we will have seed for sale coming up.

(Plainfield) Irrigating fall cabbage, late carrots, kale and rutabagas. Odd to be dry this so late in the season. Greenhouse Romas and cherry tomatoes just about done. Time to do the work of clearing out the vines and transitioning to overwintered spinach. Hoop houses continue to be a profit center. Getting winter rye and vetch on the fields as we finish up. Still spraying for cabbage moth, primarily in collards and Chinese cabbage.

(Richmond) Due to the dry spring and summer our fall raspberries grew very slowly, leaving the rows with more weeds than usual. We were not open for PYO until Sept. 2, two to three weeks later than usual. SWD also came just as they were ripening. We still had about the same amount of customer traffic as last year, but still about half the berries were infested by SWD. We've chosen not to spray; most people appreciate that. I had only one person leave due to larvae in berries. Most people don't mind dealing with it. We do keep wondering if it's worth continuing with the raspberries.

(Rochester) The fall raspberry season is still going strong. All varieties have produced very well, even Nova has begun to give us a fall crop, and before the end of September. The dry conditions have been a real help in keeping down mold and SWD pressure. We have drip irrigation throughout the planting and our wells are holding up OK. With nights falling into the 40s now we are seeing almost no SWD damage; cooler temperatures apparently slow the pest down and we are able to pick the ripe fruit before it does its damage.

(Charlotte) We are cleaning up for winter and clearing out beds and removing unwanted brush. We have a nice crop of blackberries this year. A little later than expected, but the weather is cooperating. Had a bear visit us, but he hasn't been back and luckily didn't damage the berry bushes, so far.

(Northfield) We rested a high tunnel from tomatoes and planted sweet potatoes there this year (according to some in the know not necessarily a lucrative enough crop to justify such real estate). Found a disappointing amount of vole damage, especially on sections of some tubers which grew above the soil. Perhaps the slips were planted too proud? And found an astounding stash of cover crop seed: a rodent cave pantry. We dug into a hoop house raised bed where approximately 5 pounds of oats and peas were stored under the dense sweet potato foliage. These seeds were apparently hauled from a nearby (100 feet away) field. Also having trouble with mice eating tomatoes in the farm stand.

(Brookfield) Pumpkins down 35%. No white pumpkins, no Blue Hubbard, very little Buttercup; lots of Butternut, Acorn and Delicata. Potatoes smaller but waiting for the skin to harden for storage. We have 40 plus wild turkeys, more than we usually have, and they for the first time have done real damage. Yes we are dry.

(Hampton NY) Just when I think It's all done, the garden gives me some more. The tomatoes, yellow zucchini, peppers, and patty pans produced another bushel and a half for the stand. I also harvested three more watermelon. It looks like next week I will have more Delicata and

Speckled Pup squash. Kale is doing wonderful and really liking the cooler evenings. Broadcasting the cover crop this year is not going to work as the chickens keep eating the seed. What I really need is a small set of cultivators that could be pulled behind the 4-Wheeler. I am already planning the 2017 garden and looking forward to winter.

(Little Compton RI) The drought in our part of New England has finally broken with weather systems coming up from the south. Our fall cole crops are rebounding from near death after extreme efforts to keep them limping along till the weather broke. None the less our total cole crop acreage has been cut in half. We walked away from over 8 acres of crops since June 1st! This year was a big education on how to handle drought. One lesson was understanding the effects reduced water will have on crops like celeriac. We thought we did a good job keeping the crop hydrated and the plants actually sized up very nicely, but our recent harvest has 45% hollow heart! This is a big problem since one can't tell from outward inspection which ones have it and which don't. Next time we will give up on that crop earlier, as irrigation water should have been better spent on a sure bet like carrots or beets. Winter Growing: we are simplifying our offerings and have already started planting out our houses. #1 rule no head lettuce after December 10th. After that only Salanova and baby romaines.

(Plainfield NH) Fall harvest continues with field and greenhouse tomatoes in as nice as shape as they ever have been at this time of year. Fall cucumbers and summer squash got the mildews when I let my guard down. Onion crop is down a bit in size and volume and carrots that were not in easily irrigatable areas did not fare so well. Planted our potatoes on our heaviest land this year, just because the rotation called for it and we lucked out. Not a remarkable crop because of the moisture levels, but a crop none the less. The unseasonably warm and dry weather is helping in the fall harvest at a time when labor is short. Watching hurricane Matthew in hopes that it doesn't make extra work for the rest of the fall.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT UPDATES- Becky Maden, UVM Extension

Fall Soil Testing. Don't forget to take a soil sample this fall! Soil testing in the autumn helps you make informed decisions about your soil fertility plan for the following spring, with ample time to source and order amendments. Soil tests cost \$14 through the UVM Lab. If cost prevents you from testing, some funds are available to help cover soil testing. Contact Vern for details.

Fall Cover Cropping. It's not too late to get your soil covered for the winter to prevent erosion, improve soil organic matter, and scavenge residual nutrients. At this point, winter rye is the best option for cover crop establishment. You can seed it through mid to late October in most locations.

Final RAPs Rule. The Agency of Ag filed the Required Agricultural Practices Rule with the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) in mid-September. You can see the final rule and accompanying documents on the Agency's website. The rules will be in effect for the 2017 growing season. Most vegetable farms in the state will be subject to the regulations; farms with 50 acres or more in production will need a "small farm certification." If you have questions about RAPs, contact AGR.WaterQuality@state.vt.us.

Here are some nutrient management resources: www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/NMPlinks.html. If you have questions about soil testing or nutrient management, please contact UVM Extension vegetable nutrient management specialist, Becky Maden at Rebecca.Maden@uvm.edu

SURVEY ON SELLING FOOD OUTSIDE VERMONT

The VT Agency of Agriculture is working on the development of a domestic export plan for Vermont's food, wood, beverage and farm products, and would like your input. Only owners or principals should respond to the survey, with no more than 2 responses from each company or farm. Participation in this survey is anonymous and answers will be held in confidence. Please take the survey at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VT_Domestic_Export
If you have any questions, contact Reg.Godin@vermont.gov