



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – November 10 2015  
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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Hinesburg) Hoop house spinach, lettuce, and claytonia establishing nicely. Some leaf miner damage on young spinach leaves. A bad year for the miner. I covered all chard, spinach, and beet from mid summer on but didn't think I would need to cover hoop house planting. Fall successions came on too quickly with warm weather, last CSA shares might be lean.

(Fairfax) Lots of mistakes this year. Maybe 15 inches of rain in June had something to do with it. Swede midge is becoming a major issue. Had a broccoli field that was destroyed by Swede midge and then one broccoli field three miles away that was perfect. An interesting pest that we try to keep moving away from, but are running out of fields to run to. Storage crops are coming in nicely although didn't sidedress enough on the sandy fields after all the rain, so yields are down. Sand is wonderful with excessive rains but the leaching of N is certainly a major challenge. A fantastic lettuce and cabbage year, although the deer have consumed more than their fair share of savoy and red cabbage, their preferred varieties. Greens in the tunnels are growing quickly. Nice having the warm November to finish up field harvests.

(Burlington) Fall harvest winding down, though lots of nice looking greens and 'sprouts still to come. Winter tunnel crops generally look good, but still plagued by inconsistent spinach germination - scads of Phytophthora (maybe Rhizoctonia, too) collapse at- and after emergence. No matter what I do with depth and moisture management, the problem continues to be significant. Crazy Cercospora on our late beets this year - I wouldn't have thought this summer to be ideal conditions, but our leaves were practically absent by harvest time. We are seeing more storage rot in our Delicata, though we had far less rot in the field this year. Go figure. Otherwise, storage crops look good, winter CSA sales are on track, and I'm looking forward to xc skiing.

(Dummerston) It was nice to wrap up the CSA season with an unusually warm early November. But harvesting root veggies for storage is on hold, while passively-cooled root cellars hover around 50 degrees. It's a reminder that without electrically-cooled cold storage, Nature dictates the harvest schedule. This works with my end-of-season plans this year. But it might be time for a Coolbot in the future. High tunnel greens are doing well but probably should have been started a little bit earlier. Maybe the warm temperatures will give them a chance to catch up.

(Westminster West) Loving this awesome Indian summer! Just a few field crops remain: Napa, leeks, turnips, some beets. With Thanksgiving soon, hoping to make one last sales spurt and finish up the year; already doing next year's business planning, ugh. Farmers' market done for the year, just a very modest increase over last year's sales, which gets us back to pre-recession levels finally. Storage crops selling steady and not much shrinkage except for the spaghetti squash, need to work on that as it's a good crop. Onions all pre-sold except for red onions. Carrots and turnips sitting pretty in storage. Working on re-skinning most of our 9 greenhouses, never my favorite job but this weather has been great for doing just that. Upgrading some single layer houses to inflated ones, much better that way after living with single layer for several years. The single layer houses develop more rips over time and we were never able to secure plastic so that the wind wouldn't cause it to flap around making noise and annoying people. Also, we are using the houses now for early bedding plants beside the raspberry production. So we installed heaters and need the tighter more insulated house. Cover crops still growing, which is good as some fields were done late. Looking forward to my trip to Cuba with a bunch of Vermonts top growers in 2 weeks!

(Plainfield NH) Gorgeous and forgiving weather. Rare in November are the days that start gloveless in farming; it's been a wonderful fall. Last of the root crops finally up, packing just wholesale now and doing the 6 week CSA that wraps up Thanksgiving. Lots of projects out there. Predominant when the weather does really cool off is strawberry mulching. Clean up in fields is pretty far along. The oats that I sowed have put on enough growth to look as dense as the winter rye and vetch, and the mustard continues to chug along although it has fallen over and lodged. Hopefully we will get some time to prune blueberries before winter really sets in.

(Argyle NY) Amazing nice, warm weeks and the high tunnel winter greens are looking great, much better than last year, though we planted on time this fall which is critical. We have about 12 varieties of spinach and most looking good, with some a little sparse germ, possibly due to them being hot water treated many months ago, which we always do now on several crops. Parsley looks amazing and we hope it holds all winter. Trials last winter gave us hope it will. Onion plants (Bridger, Desert Sunrise, and 6 trials) plus the Forum sets are all planted, some in 100x14 tunnel and others on bare ground with 2 layers row cover and tunnel being built over them now. Cover crops of mostly rye/clover/vetch up nicely with the fields planted in early Sept. looking best. Field greens still going strong: head lettuce, Salanovas, spinach, arugula and of course kale. A small tunnel of Salanovas is ready to have plastic thrown over it when weather turns to normal Nov. weather! Our nearly completed washing station has heat, lights, and all plumbing done, including our favorite solenoid gadget which turns the water on/off on a wall switch for the barrel washer at both ends for the operators. Good farm crew still and winter indoor markets just started. Looking forward to New England Fruit and Veg conference.

(Little Compton RI) Unusually warm weather and some opportune rains have changed the whole picture at our farm. Though the drought stress from summer is being felt as winter crops come in. The biggest worry is our Brussels sprouts delaying their sprout formation. They are kicking in now but three weeks ago I thought it was a lost crop. Sweet potatoes are small and take much longer to cook and are just not that sweet. Romanesco cauliflower, which always acts weird when stressed, is coming in deformed or not at all. So a weird fall finish but thank goodness not a K.O.! I have heard countless talks about Alternaria on Brassicas being seed related, but after hot water treating out seeds twice now I just don't see the connection. I think it is more environmental factors like water stress, temperature and dew point in the August/September. We heat treated two different plantings of Brussels sprouts and neither had Alternaria but it was also the driest summer ever in this region! The jury is still out but hot water treating is losing some of its rationale. Also, I hear from more and more fellow growers that Entrust on CPB is practically useless. A conventional chemical salesman told me that the original formulators of Spinosad knew years ago that its useful days were numbered and so they came out with Radiant a few years back and now last summer yet an even new variation on the formula. Seems like the conventional manufacturers understand the real problem. The OMRI and NOP regulators need to stay in touch with farmers and let the Entrust manufacturer company update the product to make it more effective. If we lose control of CPB with the current formula of Entrust a lot of folks are going to have big problems with their potato crops! This summer we had O.K. control but we planted our crop three miles away from last year's potato fields and I had a top-notch bug scouter keeping us in good shape.

## REQUIRED AG PRACTICES RULE WILL AFFECT VEGETABLE AND BERRY FARMS

The draft rule for Required Agricultural Practices is now available for your review and comment. RAPs were developed as mandated by Act 64, signed into law by the Governor on June 16, 2015, which amended and enacted multiple requirements related to water quality in the State.

The "accepted agricultural practices" will be renamed the "required agricultural practices" and will be the minimum standards by which a farm must manage their agricultural operations, as of July 1, 2016 or when finalized. The revised RAPs have been charged to include requirements for: small farm certification, nutrient storage, soil health, buffer zones, livestock exclusion, nutrient management, and tile drainage.

Public hearings are being held around the state to explain the rule. You can submit comments by email or regular mail; the deadline is Dec. 18, 2015. See: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/rap>

## NEW ENGLAND VEGETABLE AND FRUIT CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

December 15-17, Manchester, NH. Pre-registration ends Nov. 30 after which rates go up. <http://www.newenglandvfc.org/>. The registration fee to attend any part or all of conference is \$115 for the first member of the farm or business and \$85 for each additional member (family or employee) when pre-registered with first member.

There are two concurrent sessions with 5 presentations each, every day. Plus there are 7 farmer-to-farmer sessions and a trade show with 100+ vendors. Here's a summary of the sessions:  
Tuesday am Dec 15: Tree Fruit I, Food Safety, Specialty and Ethnic Crops, Blueberry I, Innovative Ideas for Small Acreage Growing, Beautiful Cut Flowers. Tuesday pm:  
Tree Fruit II, Brambles Winter Growing, Harvest and Handling Efficiencies, Blueberry II.

Wednesday am Dec. 16: Stone Fruit, Brassicas, Leafy Greens, Mechanical Weed Control, Strawberry I, On Farm Trials. Wednesday pm: Hard Cider, Vine Crops Soil Health Farm Decisions: Scaling Up or Not, Strawberry II

Thursday Dec. 17 am: Root Crops, Organic Production, Greenhouse Tomatoes, Viticulture I, Technology. Thursday pm: Sweet Corn, Hops, Greenhouse Container Growing, Viticulture II, Fertilizer Decision Making.

## FDA MEETING IN VERMONT Dec. 14 TO EXPLAIN FINAL FSMA RULES

On Monday Dec. 14, from 10am-4:30pm at the Latchis Theater on Main St., Brattleboro VT. Join FDA subject matter experts for an overview of three final Food Safety Modernization Act rules: Produce Safety, Preventive Controls For Human Food, and Preventive Controls For Animal Food. Ask YOUR questions about what the rules cover and who must comply.

Free and open to the public. No registration required. This event is accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or to request accommodations such as seating, interpreting, etc., call (802) 522-7811 or [AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov) in advance of the event. More info at: [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/food\\_safety\\_consumer\\_protection/fsma](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/food_safety_consumer_protection/fsma)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Jan. 25, 2016. Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Assn Annual Meeting, Fairlee.

Feb. 13-15, NOFA-VT winter conference, Burlington.