

# FRUIT

The weather conditions had different impacts on fruit crops in 1999. Winter kill was minimum because of the mild temperatures in January and February. The warmer than average temperatures in March benefitted the berry crop development. Pollination of apples and peaches was slightly affected due to low temperatures during April and May which reduced bee activities. Drought during the summer significantly reduce the peach production and amount of marketable peaches. Overall fruit quality was considered average.

Total production of the five fruit and berry crops during 1999 amounted to 230.1 million pounds, down 3 percent from 1998's production of 214.1 million pounds. Value of utilized production of the above crops totaled \$77.6 million, a loss of \$6.2 million from the 1998 total of \$83.8 million. The season average price for apples and strawberries was above the 1998 price levels, while lower prices were received for blueberries, cranberries and peaches.

During 1999, among all major fruit and berry producing states in the nation, New Jersey ranked second in blueberries, second in cranberry production and fifth in cranberry production. Ranking crops by value of production within the state resulted in blueberries first with \$36.6 million. Peaches ranked second with \$26.0 million, while cranberries ranked third with \$7.4 million. Apples and strawberries ranked fourth and fifth with \$6.4 million and \$1.3 million, respectively.

Apple production for New Jersey totaled 50.0 million pounds in 1999. All production was utilized. This was a decrease of 7 percent from last year's utilized production of 54.0 million pounds. The 1999 value of utilized production totaled \$6.4 million, down 4 percent from 1998. Gloucester county was the leading apple producing county, accounting for 48 percent of the State's total production. Cumberland county ranked second at 3.2 million pounds. Atlantic and Camden counties

tied for third with production at 3.0 million pounds and Hunterdon county ranked fifth at 2.6 million pounds.

Total peach production for 1999 totaled 70.0 million pounds. Production not utilized was estimated at 10.0 million pounds, which was the result of fruit size too small. The 1999 value of peach production was \$26.0 million compared to 1998's value of \$30.5 million, down 15 percent. Gloucester county was the leading peach growing county in the state with production of 37.0 million pounds or 53 percent of the total State's production. Cumberland was second with 13 million pounds. Atlantic and Camden counties tied for third with production at 6.0 million pounds. Burlington was fifth with production of 1.5 million pounds.

The 1999 blueberry total production was estimated at 41.0 million pounds, up 4.0 million pounds from 1998. Value of utilized production was \$36.6 million compared to 1998's value of \$28.4 million. Atlantic and Burlington counties are the leading blueberry producing areas. The season average price of 93.8 cents per pound was up 19 percent from 78.8 cents per pound in 1998.

Cranberry growers in New Jersey produced a record high 691,000 barrels in 1999, an increase of 170,000 from 1998. The value of production was \$7.4 million, down 46 percent from \$13.7 million in 1998. Burlington is the major cranberry producing county in the Garden State.

It was a normal growing season for Garden State strawberry growers. Crops developed early with minimum frost damage. Strawberry growers harvested 20,000 cwt. of strawberries in 1999, the same as in 1998. The area harvested, at 450 acres, was unchanged since 1994. The season average price was \$68.80 per hundredweight for the 1999 crop. Value of utilized production was at \$1.3 million, compared with \$0.9 million in 1998.