

MARKETING THE MICHIGAN STRAWBERRY CROP
A Brief Review of the 1953 Season

By
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FORWARD:

In 1953 for the sixth consecutive season the Market News Service Division, Fruit & Vegetable Branch, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Michigan State Dept. of Agriculture, has issued from the Benton Harbor, Michigan office, daily bulletins containing all available information pertinent to marketing strawberries in southwestern Michigan. These bulletins were available to interested parties from June 5 through July 5.

PRODUCTION: (Based on the table below as released by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, July 10, 1953.)

The National Situation: The 1953 indicated acreage is 115,850 compared to 130,610 for 1952, and 129,150 acres for 3-year average from 1949-51. Yield per acre based on 24 qt. crates was indicated at 96 for 1953, compared to 91 for 1952, and 80 for 3-year average from 1949-51. Production for 1953 was indicated at 11,108,000 crates with 11,904,000 for 1952, and 10,400,000 crates for 3-year average from 1949-51.

The Michigan Situation: The 1953 indicated acreage is 10,500 compared to 10,000 for 1952, and 8,430 acres for 3-year average from 1949-51. Yield per acre based on 24 qt. crates was indicated at 100 for 1953, compared to 100 for 1952, and 102 for 3-year average from 1949-51. Production based on 1,000 crates was indicated at 1,050 for 1953, compared to 1,000 for 1952, and 861 for 3-year average from 1949-51.

CROP AND STATE	ACREAGE			YIELD PER ACRE			PRODUCTION		
	3-Year Average/ 1949-51	1952	Ind. 1953	3-Year Average/ 1949-51	1952	Ind. 1953	3-Year Average/ 1949-51	1952	Ind. 1953
STRAWBERRIES: ^{3/}	- Acres -			- Crates, 24 qt. -			- 1,000 Crates -		
Winter:									
Florida	5,130	4,500	4,700	65	60	60	337	270	282
Early Spring:									
Louisiana	13,370	5,800	9,300	47	65	80	624	377	744
Alabama	1,770	1,300	1,000	58	75	75	103	98	75
Texas	720	500	600	62	60	65	44	30	39
Group Total	15,850	7,600	10,900	49	66	79	771	505	858
Mid-Spring:									
South Carolina	550	600	600	53	60	50	30	36	30
North Carolina	2,730	2,100	1,900	73	90	100	199	189	190
Tennessee	10,630	11,500	8,600	57	65	60	611	748	516
Arkansas	15,470	17,000	9,700	57	45	35	888	765	340
Oklahoma	2,270	2,800	1,800	77	60	40	171	168	72
Kansas	870	850	650	62	60	40	52	51	28
Missouri	5,600	6,000	3,000	58	40	25	336	240	75
Illinois	2,170	2,100	1,700	57	45	50	123	94	85
Kentucky	5,270	4,900	2,700	63	50	35	330	245	94
Virginia	4,670	4,300	3,000	55	65	60	257	280	180
Maryland	2,070	2,200	1,700	80	80	70	167	176	119
Delaware	570	360	300	70	75	75	39	27	22
California	5,670	8,400	9,400	312	340	280	1,788	2,856	2,632
Group Total	58,520	63,110	45,050	85	93	97	4,990	5,875	4,381
Late Spring:									
New Jersey	3,030	3,000	2,700	90	75	100	275	225	270
Pennsylvania	1,870	1,700	1,500	70	50	70	131	85	105
Ohio	2,130	2,000	1,800	78	65	75	167	130	135
Indiana	2,370	2,800	2,100	82	65	65	191	182	136
New York	3,830	4,100	3,900	98	95	100	377	390	390
Connecticut	630	550	550	98	85	110	63	47	60
Massachusetts	1,070	800	850	100	110	120	107	88	102
Michigan	8,430	10,000	10,500	102	100	100	861	1,000	1,050
Wisconsin	1,700	1,700	1,400	92	80	75	157	136	105
Iowa	580	500	400	60	60	60	35	30	24
Utah	750	700	500	63	70	40	48	49	20
Washington	8,130	10,000	10,800	88	120	125	711	1,200	1,350
Oregon	14,570	17,000	17,700	78	95	100	1,131	1,615	1,770
Maine	550	550	500	87	140	140	48	77	70
Group Total	49,650	55,400	55,200	87	95	101	4,302	5,254	5,587
ALL STATES	129,150	130,610	115,850	80	91	96	10,400	11,904	11,108

^{1/} For group totals and for all States, averages are of the annual totals, not the sum of the State or group averages.

^{3/} Total crop for fresh market and processing.

The 1953 season was a record breaker for the number of crates of strawberries that passed over the Benton Harbor cash market. The previous season high was set in 1951 with 534,402 crates as compared to 553,200 for 1953. This figure is approximately 20,000 crates more than 1951. Barring the two days of very hot dry weather of June 19 and 20, the 1953 yield could have been considerably more. Many of the young green berries were damaged by the very high temperature and hot dry winds. Increased acreage for 1953 is one factor for increased production.

HARVESTING:

Preseason growing conditions were generally favorable for the 1953 strawberry crop. Timely showers throughout the harvesting period greatly aided size and quality. The two main varieties Premiers and Robinsons were of good quality until the extremely hot dry weather of June 19 and 20. From then until the end of the season the size and quality deteriorated rapidly, especially on unirrigated soils.

May 30 saw the first crate of strawberries move across the market. By June 6, 5,743 16 qt. crates were checked through the gates. The receipts increased sharply to 31,486 on June 9. June 12 and 14 saw 61,198 and 57,844 crates, respectively. These two days broke the previous record of 53,218 set on June 17, 1951. Production continued fairly high until June 22 with 14,815 crates and dropped considerably to 859 crates by July 1.

MARKETING THE CROP: Benton Harbor Cash Market

The majority of the strawberries were marketed in the 16 qt. crates, most of which were nailed and the balance wirebound. Most days saw a few 12 qt. flats and cartons. The processors took a considerable portion of berries marketed on June 12 and 14. The demand and movement for good quality berries remained good and sold at relatively high prices throughout the season.

Saturday marketing was tried for the first time in the history of the market. The market was open on Saturday, June 13, and 20. And on Sunday, June 14, with 57,844 crates the market price had advanced when the day's trading ended. This was the first time that the market price increased under such heavy volume. In the past with heavy receipts, the market price was lowered substantially. The psychological effect of the first Saturday trading coupled along with many orders in the hands of the buyers could help to explain the stronger market price that existed on Sunday, June 14.

The tabulation below shows the daily high and low price ranges and average daily price paid to growers for 16 qt. crates of the two principal varieties, Premiers and Robinsons, sold on the Benton Harbor cash market. The wide range reflects primarily the wide range of quality and condition of berries being offered along with other marketing conditions.

DATE	VARIETIES		Daily Average	DATE	VARIETIES		Daily Average
	Premiers	Robinsons			Premiers	Robinsons	
June 1	\$ 6.00-8.00		\$ 7.00	June 19	\$ 3.00-4.75	3.50-6.35	\$ 4.55
2	5.75-8.00		6.75	20	3.00-3.85	3.00-4.50	3.64
3	5.50-8.50		7.00	21	3.00-3.85	3.25-6.00	4.41
4	6.00-9.50		8.50	22	N O N E	3.25-6.50	4.21
5	6.00-10.00		8.00	23	N O N E	3.50-6.50	4.83
6	S A T U R D A Y			24	N O N E	4.00-7.80	5.42
7	4.00-8.50	4.00-8.50	7.15	25	N O N E	3.75-7.60	5.05
8	4.00-8.00	4.00-8.00	6.15	26	N O N E	4.00-6.55	4.91
9	3.50-6.00	3.50-6.00	4.30	27	S A T U R D A Y		
10	3.00-5.50	3.00-5.50	4.65	28	N O N E	3.50-7.00	4.95
11	3.50-6.00	3.50-6.00	4.92	29	N O N E	3.50-7.50	4.51
12	3.00-5.25	3.00-5.25	3.76	30	N O N E	3.25-6.00	4.36
13	3.00-3.60	3.00-4.10	3.32	July 1	N O N E	3.60-6.50	4.40
14	3.00-4.30	3.25-4.40	3.67	2	Too few sales to quote.		
15	3.00-4.20	3.50-4.50	3.73	3	Market closed.		
16	3.35-4.50	3.50-5.10	4.14	4	Holiday.		
17	4.00-5.15	4.50-6.00	4.93	5	Too few sales to quote. Last report.		
18	3.65-5.50	4.50-6.50	5.07				

The following tabulation is a ten-year comparison, from 1944 through 1953, of the total number of packages, their carlot equivalent based on 600 sixteen qt. crates per car, the weighted average price for the season and the total value of the strawberries marketed at the Benton Harbor cash market.

BENTON HARBOR CASH MARKET

SEASON	Total No. Packages	Carlot Equivalent	Weighted Average Price for Season	Total Season Value
1953	553,200	922	4.46	\$ 2,466,022
1952	484,519	808	3.83	1,853,439
1951	534,302	891	4.06	2,170,342
1950	477,982	759	4.03	1,926,267
1949	382,271	683	4.74	1,811,965
1948	265,082	473	5.52	1,463,252
1947	362,611	648	5.20	1,887,577
1946	136,283	243	7.14	973,060
1945	40,431	73	5.76	232,882
1944	49,503	88	5.00	247,515
Ten-Year Averages	328,618	589	4.97	\$ 1,513,232

DISPOSITION OF THE CROP: Benton Harbor Cash Market

The table below shows the number of packages and their carlot equivalent, based on 600 sixteen qt. crates per car, checked through the Benton Harbor cash market gates in 1953 as compared with 1952.

DATE	1953		1952		DATE	1953		1952	
	16 qt. crates	C/L equiv.	16 qt. crates	C/L equiv.		16 qt. crates	C/L equiv.	16 qt. crates	C/L equiv.
May 30 thru									
June 4	1,946	3.2	3,677	6.1	June 20	9,838	16.3	22,519	37.5
5	3,798	6.3	4,340	7.2	21	26,810	44.6	S A T U R D A Y	
6	S A T U R D A Y		10,498	17.5	22	14,815	24.6	22,992	38.3
7	14,321	23.8	S A T U R D A Y		23	8,192	13.6	31,076	51.7
8	13,786	22.9	23,084	38.4	24	6,245	10.4	24,196	40.3
9	31,486	52.4	14,246	23.7	25	5,703	9.5	21,256	35.4
10	26,557	44.2	22,954	33.2	26	4,242	7.4	14,299	23.8
11	40,015	66.6	21,094	35.1	27	S A T U R D A Y		10,570	17.6
12	61,198	101.9	24,167	40.2	28	4,837	8.0	S A T U R D A Y	
13	11,423	19.0	45,410	75.7	29	2,911	4.8	4,085	6.8
14	57,844	96.4	S A T U R D A Y		30	864	1.3	2,631	4.3
15	46,173	77.0	50,353	83.9	July 1	859	1.4	1,252	2.0
16	47,762	79.5	33,731	56.2	2	Too few to quote		1,373	2.2
17	41,647	69.3	20,227	33.7	3	M A R K E T C L O S E D			
18	38,541	64.1	23,380	38.9	4	S A T U R D A Y		610	1.0
19	31,143	51.9	30,404	50.6	5	Last Report		S A T U R D A Y	
T O T A L S					6			95	0.2
						553,200	922.0	484,519	807.2

Although the bulk of the strawberry shipments for fresh consumption originates at the Benton Harbor cash market, there were shipments originating at other points in southwestern Michigan. The best available, but incomplete information, from five surrounding territories shows an estimated 90,555 16 qt. crates or 150.9 carlot equivalents, shipped from these districts during 1953.

DISPOSITION OF THE CROP: Processors

Processors are always an important factor in the disposition and marketing of Michigan strawberries. Purchases made on the Benton Harbor cash market moved to processors in Michigan and other out-of-state processors, and there are large processing plants in the local area which receive their strawberries directly from growers and co-ops. Some out-of-state processors also purchase directly from the growers and co-ops. The southwestern Michigan area gained a new processor. The Clermont Fruit Packers, Inc. of Clermont, New York operated at Hartford this season.

The tabulation below is a comparison of the 1953 and 1952 strawberry purchases by processors. It is based on the best information available, furnished by processors in southwestern Michigan. Some of the total figures are exact and others only approximations.

MOVEMENT OF MICHIGAN STRAWBERRIES TO PROCESSORS

Method	1953 Pounds	Av. Price	1953 Value	Method	1952 Pounds	Av. Price	1952 Value
Field Capped	8,040,172	.19	\$1,527,632.68	Field Capped	4,607,603	.16½	\$747,735.49
Uncapped	368,324	.141	51,933.68	Uncapped	429,093	.11	47,200.23
TOTALS	8,408,496	-	\$1,579,566.36		5,036,696	-	\$794,935.72

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CROP:

Trucks move the southwestern Michigan strawberries to the terminal markets. Weather conditions, final destinations, and condition of strawberries determine whether they are hauled by open air or refrigerator trucks.

No records are available on which to base a final destination tabulation, but a large part of the crop is distributed throughout the Midwest and parts of the East and a few in the far South.

An incomplete list of the final destinations of strawberries grown in this area is shown below.

TRUCK DISTRIBUTION OF MICHIGAN STRAWBERRIES 1953 SEASON

State and City	State and City	State and City	State and City
GEORGIA Atlanta	INDIANA - Cont'd Indianapolis Kokomo	MICHIGAN - Cont'd Detroit Flint Grand Rapids Kalamazoo Lansing Pontiac Saginaw St. Joseph	OHIO - Cont'd Cleveland Columbus Dayton Elyria Findlay Hamilton Lima Springfield Toledo Van Wert Youngstown
ILLINOIS Bloomington Champaign Chicago Colfax Danville Decatur Dixon East St. Louis Elgin Joliet Kankakee Latham LaSalle Mattoon Ottawa Peoria Roberts Rockford Springfield	IOWA Burlington Des Moines Fort Dodge Iowa City Mason City Waterloo	MINNESOTA Minneapolis Rochester St. Paul	PENNSYLVANIA Harrisburg Philadelphia Pittsburgh
INDIANA Anderson Elkhart Evansville Fort Wayne Gary Hammond	KENTUCKY Frankfort Lexington Louisville	MISSOURI Kansas City St. Louis	WEST VIRGINIA Huntington
	MICHIGAN Battle Creek Benton Harbor Beulah Cadillac	NEW YORK Buffalo New York Rochester	WISCONSIN Appleton Fon du Las Green Bay Madison Milwaukee Racine Stevens Point
		OHIO Akron Alliance Bellefontaine Bowling Green Canton Cincinnati	NORTH DAKOTA Fargo Grand Forks

TERMINAL MARKETS:

Listed below are jobbing sales of Michigan strawberries in important terminal markets, as released by the Market News Service. These sales are quoted on sales of strawberries of all qualities and conditions in 16 quart crates. The middle column represents quotations on various varieties, mostly Premiers and Robinsons.

JOBGING SALES OF MICHIGAN STRAWBERRIES IN IMPORTANT MARKETS

Date	CHICAGO		CINCINNATI		DETROIT	
	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons
June 5	8.00-9.50	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
6	SATURDAY					
7	SUNDAY					
8	4.00-8.00	NONE	6.00-8.00		7.00-8.00	
9	4.00-7.00	NONE	4.00-6.00	NONE	4.50-7.00	
10	3.50-5.00	NONE	5.50	NONE	4.50-5.50	
11	4.00-6.00		5.00-6.00	NONE	4.50-5.50	6.00
12	3.50-5.50		3.75-5.50		4.50-5.75	6.25
13	SATURDAY					
14	SUNDAY					
15	3.25-5.50		4.25-5.00		4.00-4.25	4.50-5.25

CHICAGO		CINCINNATI		DETROIT		
Date	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons
June 16	2.00-5.00		5.00		4.00-5.00	
17	3.00-6.00		4.00-5.75		3.50-5.25	
18	4.00-6.00		4.50-6.25		4.25-6.00	
19	3.50-7.25		6.50-7.50		4.00-6.00	
20	SATURDAY		SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
21	SUNDAY		SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
22	3.50-6.00		4.00-6.00		3.75-5.25	
23	3.00-6.50		5.00-5.50		4.00-5.50	
24	4.00-6.50		4.00-8.00		4.65-6.00	
25	4.50-7.50		8.50-8.75		5.65-6.50	
26	4.00-7.50		6.50-7.00		NONE	6.00
27	SATURDAY		SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
28	SUNDAY		SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
29	4.00-7.00		NONE	6.75-7.50	NONE	6.00-7.00
30	3.00-6.00		NONE	4.00-7.50		6.00-7.00
July 1	5.00		NONE	NONE		5.00-7.25
2	4.00		NONE	NONE		7.00-7.50

CLEVELAND		MINNEAPOLIS		
Date	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons
June 8	NONE	NONE	8.25-8.50	NONE
9	NONE	NONE	7.25-8.50	NONE
10	5.50-6.00		6.50-7.00	NONE
11	4.75-5.00	5.25-5.50	4.00-6.50	NONE
12	4.50-6.00	5.50-6.00	2.00-6.75	NONE
13	SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
14	SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
15	3.50-5.50		5.00-6.00	
16	3.50-3.75	4.00-4.50	2.00-5.40	
17	NONE	NONE	5.25-5.40	NONE
18	NONE	NONE	5.00-5.25	NONE
19	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
20	SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
21	SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
22	NONE	4.50-5.00	NONE	NONE
23	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
24	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
25	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

PITTSBURGH		ST. LOUIS		
Date	Premiers	Robinsons	Premiers	Robinsons
June 8	8.00-9.00	NONE	5.00-7.00	NONE
9	5.00-7.00	NONE	4.50-5.00	NONE
10	6.50-7.00	NONE	4.50-5.75	NONE
11	6.00		4.75-6.25	NONE
12	5.00-5.75		4.75-6.00	NONE
13	SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
14	SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
15	4.50-5.25		4.25-5.25	
16	4.50-5.00	NONE	4.50-5.25	
17	NONE	NONE	4.75-5.50	
18	NONE	NONE	4.75-6.25	
19	NONE	6.40	4.75-6.50	
20	SATURDAY		SATURDAY	
21	SUNDAY		SUNDAY	
22	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
23	NONE	NONE	4.75-6.00	
24	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
25	NONE	NONE	6.50-7.50	6.50-7.50