Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 23, 2011 Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension (802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) Bizzare summer: we had more river water in the fields this spring than I've seen in 18 years and Iess water in the river channel by early August than any time since 2001. Found late blight in our field tomatoes on August 13. With the dry weather and a few prior copper applications, things don't look so bad; a big difference from 2009 when even incessant sprays barely staved it off. Overall outdoor tomatoes are the best we've had in years. Potatoes as yet unaffected by late blight, though the hopper burn has really taken over since I got tired of applying Pyganic for mediocre efficacy in mid-July. Interesting that 'Keuka Gold' appears to have better field tolerance of leafhopper than any of the others cultivars: Kennebec (which had been best in prior years), Red Maria, Carola, Superior, and Red Norland. In the onions we really like the look of 'Siskiyou', an improved 'Walla Walla' type available through High Mowing Seed. Without Walla Walla to compare to directly I can't say with certainty (aside from 2011 being a generally good onion year), but Siskiyou appears more disease resistant than Walla Walla and our other cultivars. Siskiyou sized up nicely and the necks dried down well and made some really nice bulbs (and a few 2 pounders); this with a late start in the field. Still uncertain of effect of white vs. black poly effect on onion thrips population, though damage doesn't look significantly different in our trial.

(Waitsfield) Late blight has claimed its toll; it came in over the stormy weekend and I can confirm it is also in the potatoes. It is widespread all over the valley and in two of my fields 4 miles apart.

(Kathmandu, Nepal) This has to be the furthest distance anyone ever filed a Vermont field report from! As I left Putney 2 days ago, our onion harvest was about 1/3 done with the rest of the crop due to be harvested this week and next. Crop looks excellent with large size and no disease seen. Trialed some different varieties and if the crew can keep them separated should have some nice comparisons to report. Thrip damage was very low with good control from Entrust or just a low onion thrip year. Winter squashes maturing fast with Acorns and Sunshine ready to pick soon as we want. Unsure of the yields until the fields all brought in. Fall carrots and beets looking nice despite some germination issues with carrots. Top dressed with fertilizer to give them a little kick. Tunnel tomatoes are flooding in just when demand is flagging a bit. Sales at our main farmers market are doing well while the newer smaller markets are suffering from lack of customers. Too many farmers markets? The 33kwh solar generating project should be finished in 2 weeks; it looks awesome and can t wait to start getting checks from the power company! Our Barn rehab is also well under way with the crew getting ready to pour a 3,000 sq. ft. concrete floor when I return. Just in time to start bringing the fall crops in. Seed garlic almost all dried and nematode testing reporting a clean bill of health; we will start fulfilling orders also when I return in 2 weeks. This morning we are flying to a remote section of Nepal and then drive through 7 rivers and washed out roads to begin my vegetable development project in Nepal.

The sweet potatoes look good and the Plant Skydd is working great to keep deer out of them and the beets. Onion crop when we left was green and beautiful but now is down and drying up with a little purple blotch. Won't be a bumper year, but okay. We will be seeding the onions for the early spring production again by onion sets. Our trials went well with that and each year we improve, more details on that next time. Markets are still strong with our high diversity of offerings. Soon we'll be thinking about seeding for winter production.

(Salisbury NH) Harvesting, trying to beat back the weeds, and getting hoophouse ready for fall plantings. Garlic is all going soft; looks like we'll have to buy seed garlic in order to plant this fall. Not happy with New Zealand spinach; it grew in the heat but customer feedback was not positive. Beets got too big on some of the earlier plantings. Not woody but better for pickled beets. Still getting nice broccoli; second plantings of cauliflower is looking better with less heat and more rain plus we will get them blanched with elastics. Beans galore. Tomatoes are fantastic. The only complaint about Jetstar is that there are too many huge ones. Many customers want a smaller salad tomato. Cabbage doesn't sell much in summer. Want to get commercial kitchen some day and make coleslaw. Fall peas have blossoms and some pods. Walla Walla onions were great again. Tomato hornworms showed up en masse; they hide so well. Guessing we have twice-stabbed stink bugs on mainly the snapdragons. Don't seem to be doing any damage but they don't come off easily even dunking them in water. Carrots got big fast. Many had multiple legs (is that nematodes?). Also quite a few split. Millionaire eggplants were loaded this year. Black Beauty seemed to only produce one or two good sized fruit. Cucumbers producing like crazy, mainly Marketmore.

FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Late blight has been confirmed samples from Burlington, Jericho and Hinesburg with reports of the disease from growers in Northfield, Waitsfield, Greensboro, Hyde Park, Berlin, Moretown, Warren and Walden in both field and greenhouse tomatoes. Given the recent wet weather the disease will continue to show up around the state on a regular basis. Keeping tissue protected with fungicides is the best insurance at this point. In greenhouses, good ventilation will help but when late blight arrives via spores on the wind currents into the greenhouse and humidity is high, the spores can infect. Some growers have wondered whether closing sides to keep out spores would be beneficial but I suspect this would only serve to raise humidity. Probably best to keep sides open and air moving to lower humidity and protect the plants with fungicides. High temps and dry conditions will help keep it at bay only to start back up again when conditions change. For organic growers, spraying with copper is the most effective control but may result in having to wash fruit before marketing. Scout houses and fields diligently and spray rigorously (5 day intervals for organic) at first evidence of the disease.

Yellow shoulder disorder on tomatoes has been reported by growers, especially on heirlooms. It appears to be caused by a complex of factors with varietal susceptibility, weather conditions and soil nutrition being implicated. In high tunnels, shade cloth may help to lower temps. http://www.hightunnels.org/PDF/JETT_High_Tunnel_Temp_Mgt.pdf http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/Tom_ComDis.htm http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/tomato/prese2004.pdf