

April, 1965

Agr. Econ. 381

THE 1965 SPRING CROP TOMATO SITUATION

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General Situation

The size of the 1965 spring tomato crop is expected to be below that of last year and below average. Plantings in December 1964 were higher than those a year before, but those in January 1965 were substantially below those in January 1964 (Fig. 1). Plantings after February 1 were 2960 acres in 1965 (up 1030 acres over 1964—520 in Florida and 510 in Texas). It is this increase in late plantings that causes some uncertainty in the tomato supply in May and June.

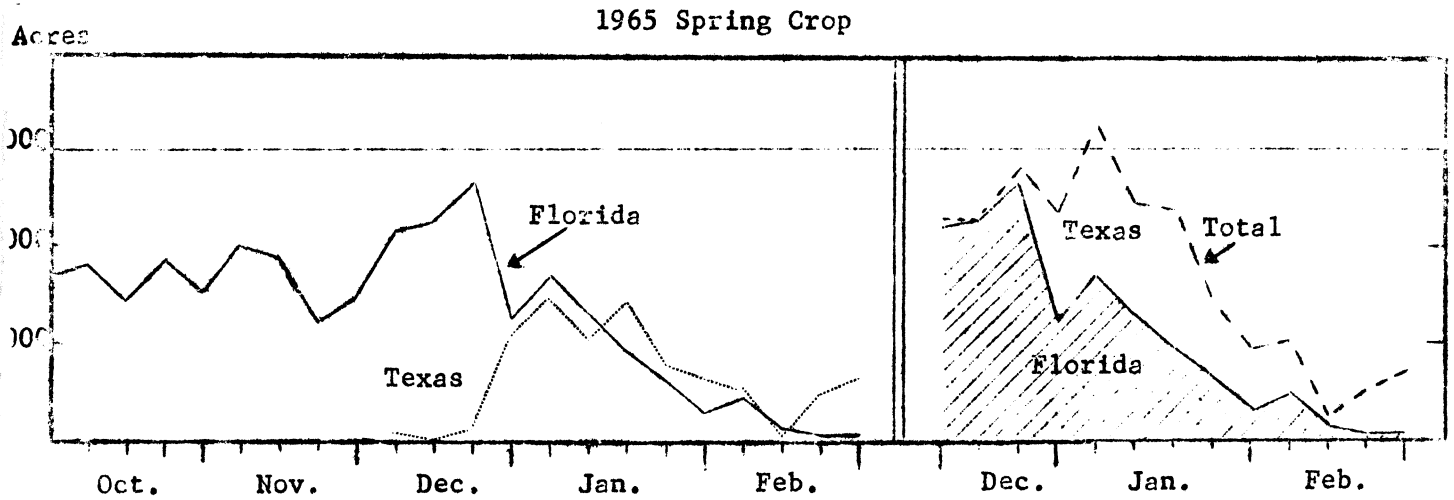
Some indication of the outlook can be found in comparing the present stage of development of the crop in Florida with that for last year. On April 17, 1965, there were almost 5000 fewer acres that were yet to be picked the first time than was the case a year ago (Table 1). Although Texas has yet to start picking there are 1750 acres less for harvest than available a year ago at this time.

Table 1. Tomato Plant Development and Progress of Harvest for Fresh Market, Florida and Texas, April 17, 1965

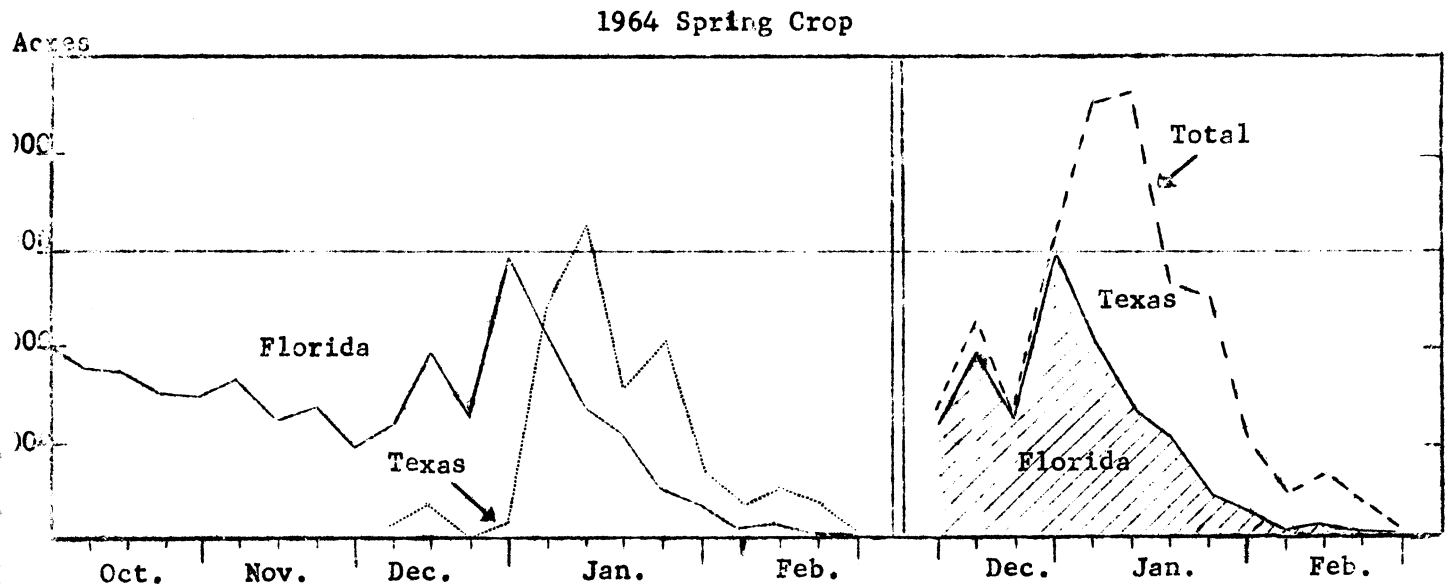
STAGES	FLORIDA		TEXAS		TOTAL 2 STATES	
	1963-64	1964-65	1963-64	1964-65	1963-64	1964-65
	-Acres-		-Acres-		-Acres-	
Pre-fruit stage	800	270	5,840	5,380	6,640	5,650
Fruit set						
Early development	6,280	2,610	4,410	3,170	12,690	5,780
Har. expect 2 wks.	3,600	2,830	50	---	3,650	2,830
Times harvested						
Once	2,050	2,870	---	---	2,050	2,870
Twice	1,230	2,900	---	---	1,230	2,900
Three or more	3,330	3,410	---	---	3,330	3,410
Harvest completed	26,190	35,280	---	---	26,190	35,280

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Statistical Reporting Service, Crop Reporting Board, Washington, D. C.

Figure 1. Acreage of Tomatoes Planted Weekly in Florida and Texas \*



Plantings were much lower in January 1965 than in January 1964. Plantings after January were small for both years.



\* U.S.D.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida

A total of 140 acres of Florida vine ripe tomatoes have yet to set fruit compared with none a year ago. However, the acreage of vine ripe tomatoes now being picked is about 800 acres lower than that for this date in 1964 (Table 2). This indicates that the supply of vine ripe tomatoes from Florida is about finished.

Table 2. Comparison of Florida Vine Ripe Acreage for 1964 and 1965 Seasons

	Florida Vine Ripe	
	1964	1965
	-Acres-	
Pre-fruit set	---	140
Fruit set	---	---
Harvest in 2 weeks	110	---
Harvesting		
Picked once	100	60
Picked twice	90	---
Picked three or more	2820	2110
Season Total Acreage	5150	6780

Source: Weekly Tomato Report, Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

### 1965 Crop by States and Major Production Areas

#### Florida

All plantings and transplanting of the winter and early spring tomato crop in Florida was completed by March 20. Acreage for harvest this season is 50,170 acres which is 6,690 acres, or 15 percent more than last season (Table 3). The peak of the planting occurred earlier this season than last (Fig. 1).

Harvesting this season is also ahead of last year. As of April 17 only 14,890 acres were still in various stages of harvest compared to 17,890 acres on the same date last year. In other words, 70 percent of the acreage was harvested by April 17, 1965, while only 60 percent had been harvested on the same date last season.

Shipments for most weeks from Florida in January and February of this year have run higher than in 1964 reflecting the earlier planting and harvesting (Fig. 2). Since March 15 shipments have run somewhat lower than in 1964.

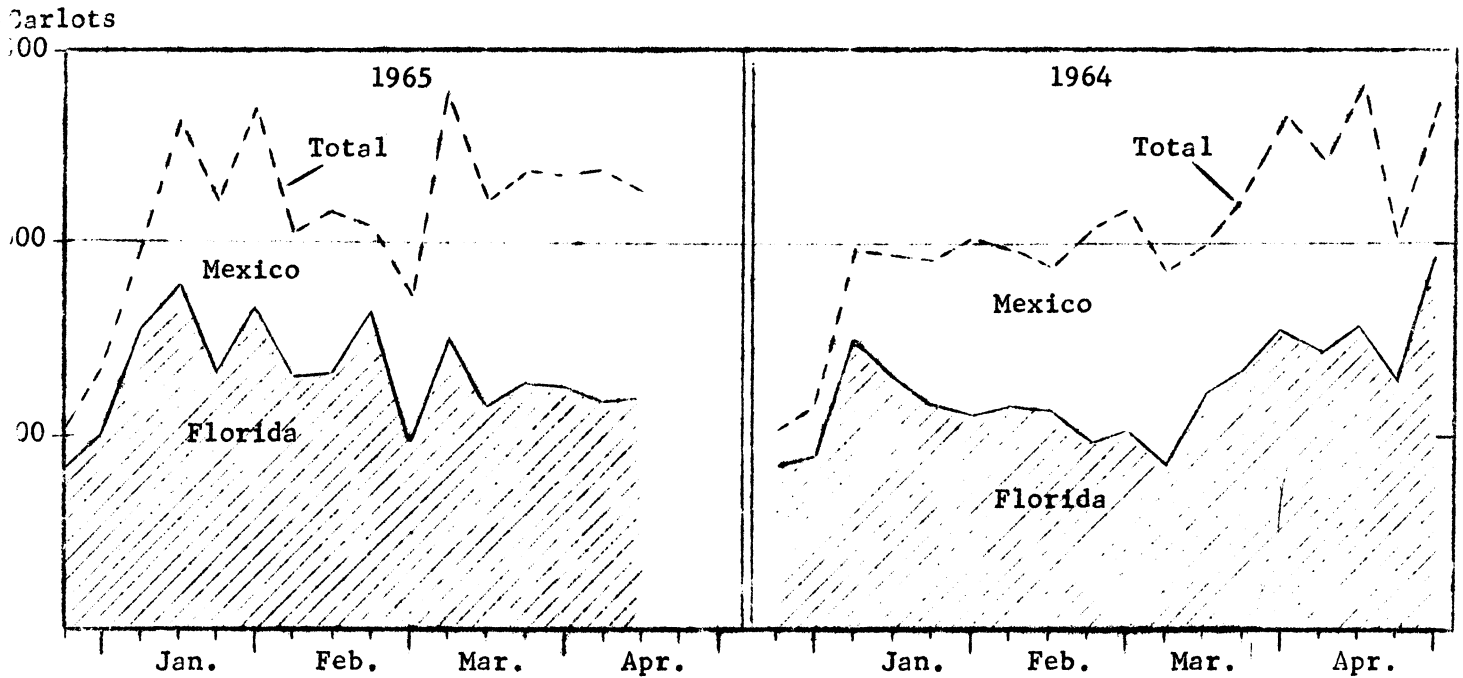
Table 3. Florida Tomato Acreage Inventory 1964-65 Season as of April 17, 1965 and Comparisons with 1964

Area	Acres for Harvest	Stage of Development of Tomato Acreage					
		Pre-Fruit Set	Fruit Set	Harvest Begin 2 Weeks	Harvesting Number Times Picked		
					One	Two	3 or more
FLORIDA							
Vine-Ripe	6780	140	---	---	60	---	2110
Dade	23150	---	---	---	---	40	---
Ft. Pierce	7000	---	1270	1080	480	400	260
Immokalee	6880	---	340	460	740	1170	620
Manatee	5310	---	80	1290	1590	1290	420
N. Central	1050	130	920	---	---	---	---
1964-65 Total	50170	270	2610	2830	2870	2900	3410
1963-64 Total	43480	800	6280	3600	2050	1230	3330

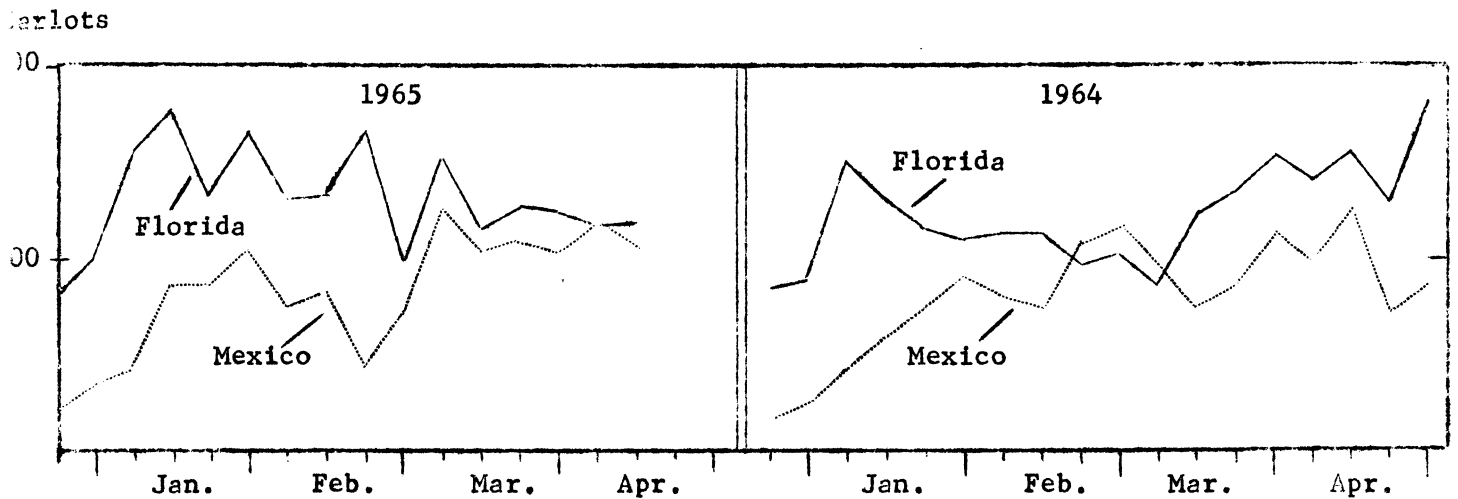
Source: Florida Crop and Livestock Reporting Service

Vine Ripe - Acreage is above last season. A total of 6,780 acres were planted for the 1964-65 harvest compared with 5,150 acres last season. This represents about 32 percent increase. As of April 18 last year there were still 3,200 acres in various stages of harvest while this season, even with the acreage increase, only 2,310 acres were still being harvested as of April 17. Quality and size of the fruit from the remaining acreage is only fair to good. Disease and

Figure 2. Weekly Shipments of Tomatoes from Florida and Mexico  
1964 and 1965 Spring Crops \*



Shipments during January 1965 were much above those of 1964. During March 1965, the shipments are much above those for 1964, primarily because of the higher imports from Mexico.



During the January - March season the shipments from Florida are much less variable than those from Mexico.

\* U.S.B.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida.

above normal temperatures are causing many fields to be abandoned earlier than normal. Volume is declining seasonally and only light supplies can be expected for the next few weeks.

Dade County - This area had 23,150 acres for winter and early spring harvest which is 46 percent of the entire Florida acreage for this season. Last year the acreage in this area was 19,610. The increase this season is 18 percent. Harvest was virtually complete as of April 17, while it was only about 92 percent completed on the same date last year (Table 3).

Fort Pierce - Harvest was 50 percent completed as of April 17 this season, and 43 percent completed on the same date last year. Acreage is up from 6,340 acres in 1964 to 7,000 acres in 1965. Plant condition is very good, but yields remain below normal. Peak volume should occur in early May with production gradually declining to mid-June.

Fort Myers-Immokalee - There were 6,880 acres for harvest this season and 6,360 acres last year. This is an 8 percent increase. About 52 percent of this acreage has been harvested to Date (April 17) compared to 44 percent on the same date last year. Fruit quality is generally good. Volume is expected to be good throughout April and gradually decline during May.

Manatee-Ruskin-Wauchula - The 5310 acres for harvest this season is 210 acres above last year. By April 18 last year 680 acres had been harvested while 640 acres had been harvested by the same date this year. Plant conditions, especially in older fields, are generally below normal. Some plantings are suffering from lack of irrigation. Volume is increasing and peak harvest is expected in May.

North Central - Acreage in this area is up 23 percent from last season. There are 1,050 acres for harvest this year and 850 acres in 1964. Weather recently, has been favorable for plant growth and fruit sizing. Plant condition is generally good. Harvest usually starts about May 15 and continues through most of June.

#### Texas

Acreage in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas is about 30 percent below last year. In 1964 there were 12,300 acres for harvest while there are only 8,550 acres this year. Weekly plantings followed about the same pattern this season as last. Cold weather hampered plant growth early in the season but recently the plants have made good progress. Light harvest will likely start early in May with peak volume occurring in late May or early June. Shipments usually continue throughout June.

#### Mexico

Shipments from January 1 through April 17 have run ahead of last year. Volume of vine-ripes continues rather heavy with quality good. Vine-ripes and mature greens are expected to remain in good volume into May and drop rapidly until the end in early June.

#### Tomato Shipments

Normally, shipments of fresh tomatoes rise rapidly from a low in January to a high in May (Fig. 3). Currently shipments are running below those for the 1963 and 1964 seasons. Due to the reduced acreage and weather and disease problems the peak in shipments in 1965 is likely to be much below that of the last two years.



### Other Spring Crop Areas

The only data available regarding probable supplies in the near future are for Florida and Texas. For the month of May these states account for most of the total shipments (Fig. 4). For June, Florida and Texas are still the largest fresh tomato shippers, but another group of states including Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia become important in supplying the market area served by the Ohio greenhouse grower. In July, these states along with California are the largest competitors of the greenhouse industry. Data on the plantings and crop conditions in these states are needed.

### Tomato Prices

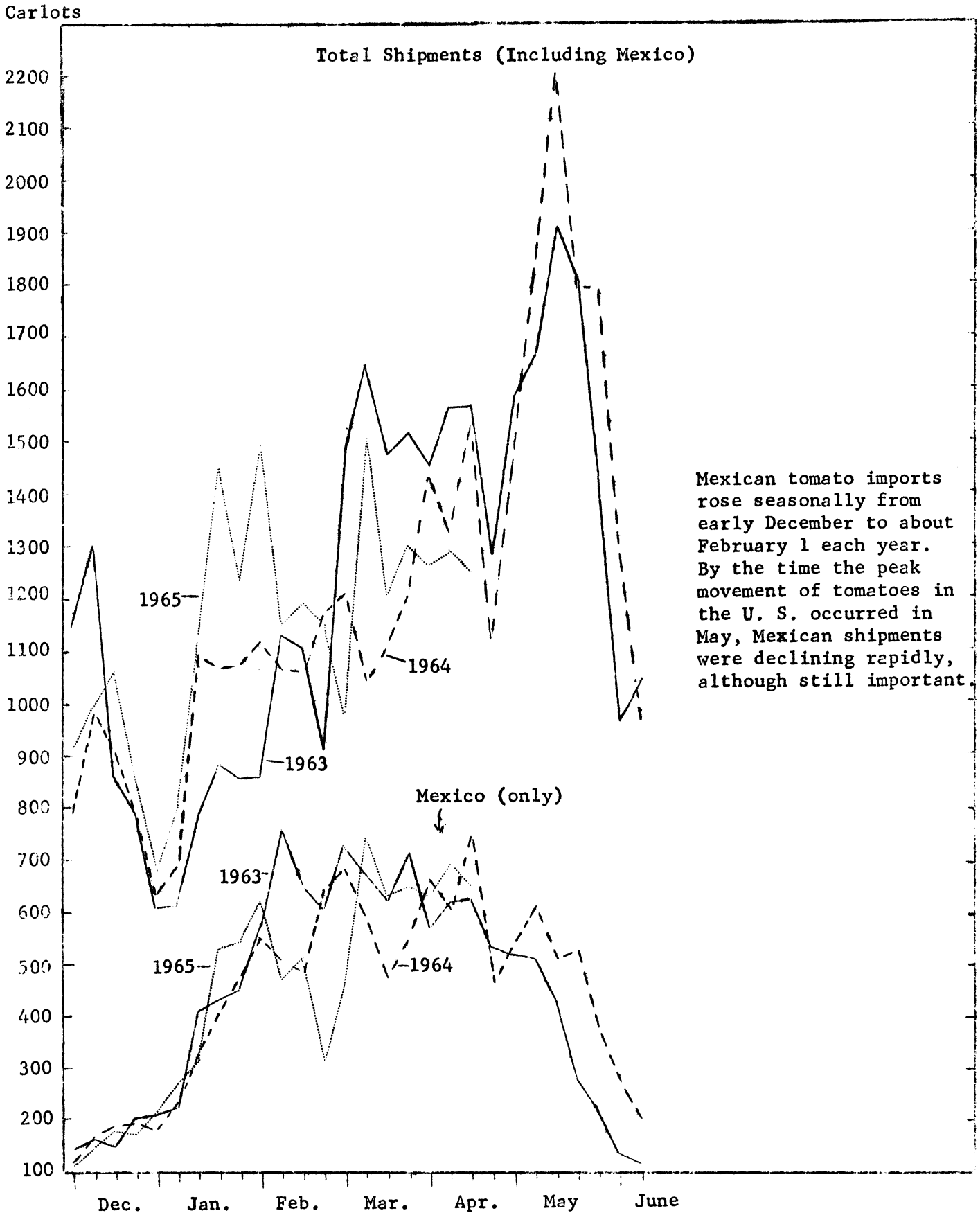
Figure 5 shows tomato prices in the Cleveland and Cincinnati markets for 1964. A major difference between the two markets is the fact that while prices of vine ripe tomatoes in Cleveland are frequently below those for tube tomatoes, this seldom happens in Cincinnati. Another difference is the considerably lower level of tube tomato prices in the Cincinnati than the Cleveland market. It also appears that the level of the tomato market in Cincinnati was lower than that in Cleveland, especially in the 1964 season.

Tomato prices in April, 1965, are higher than those for April, 1964, by 50 to 75 cents per 8 pound basket of U.S. 1 Medium tomatoes.

### Market Area for Greenhouse and Other Ohio Tomatoes

Tomatoes from Ohio Greenhouses were shipped to 14 major U. S. cities in 1963. Other shipments were made to smaller U. S. cities and to Canadian cities. The degree to which fresh tomato needs were supplied by

Figure 3. Fresh Tomato Shipments in U.S. December-June 1963, 1964 and 1965 Seasons (Florida, California, Texas and Mexico)



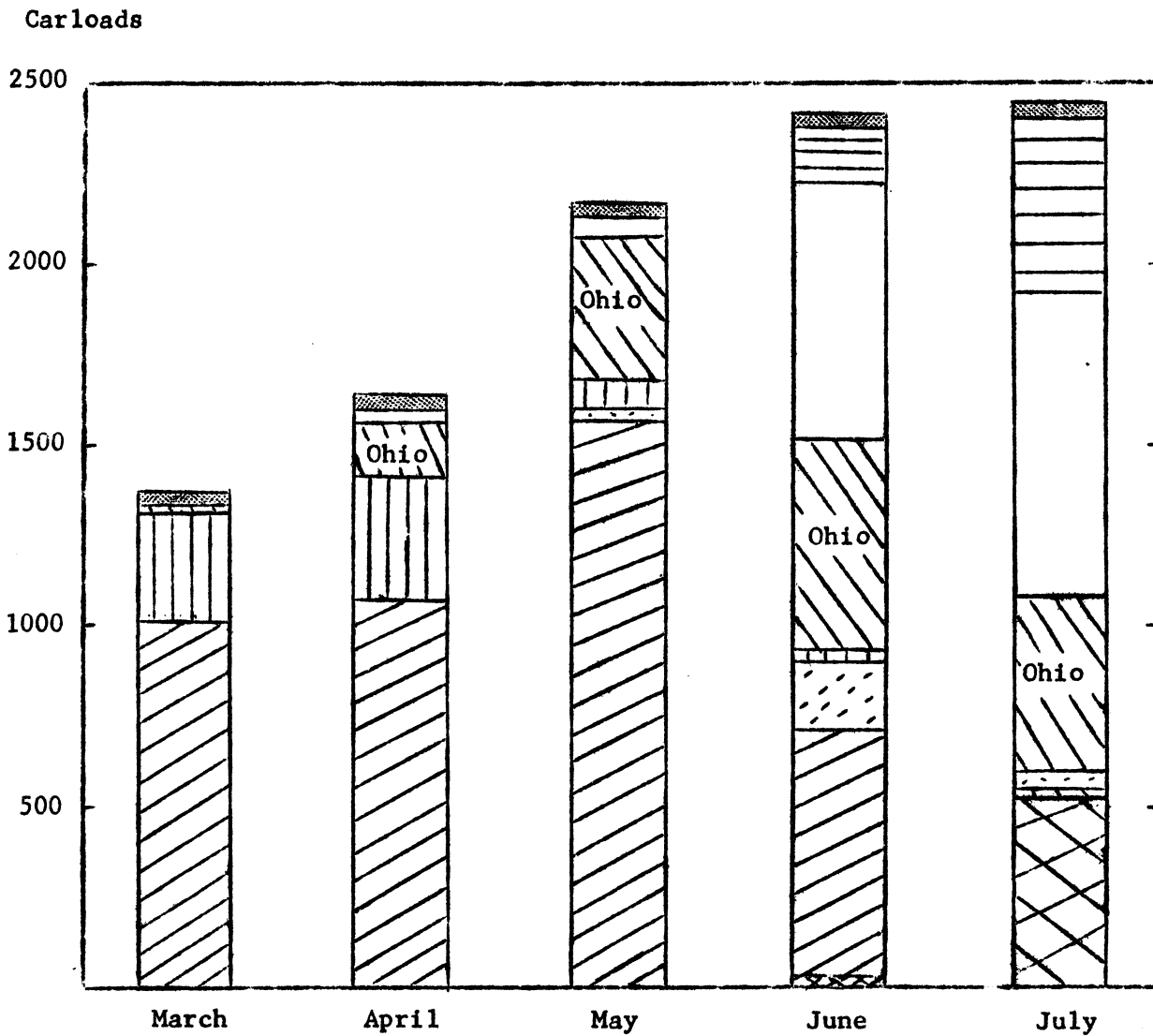
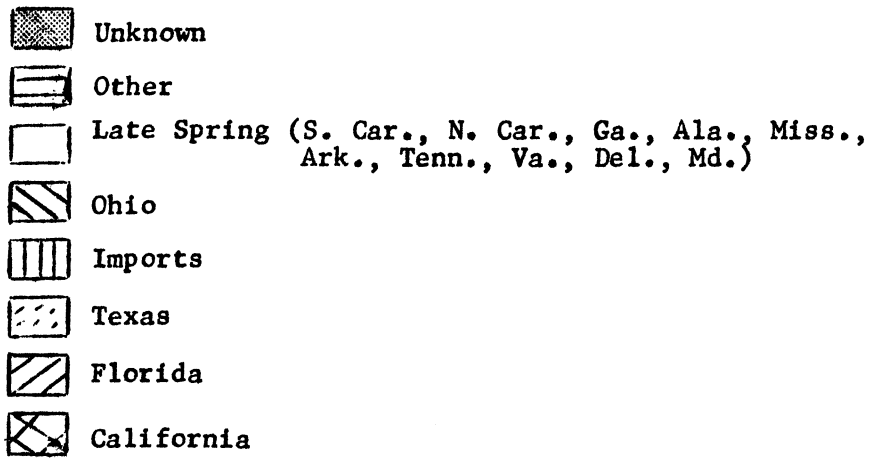
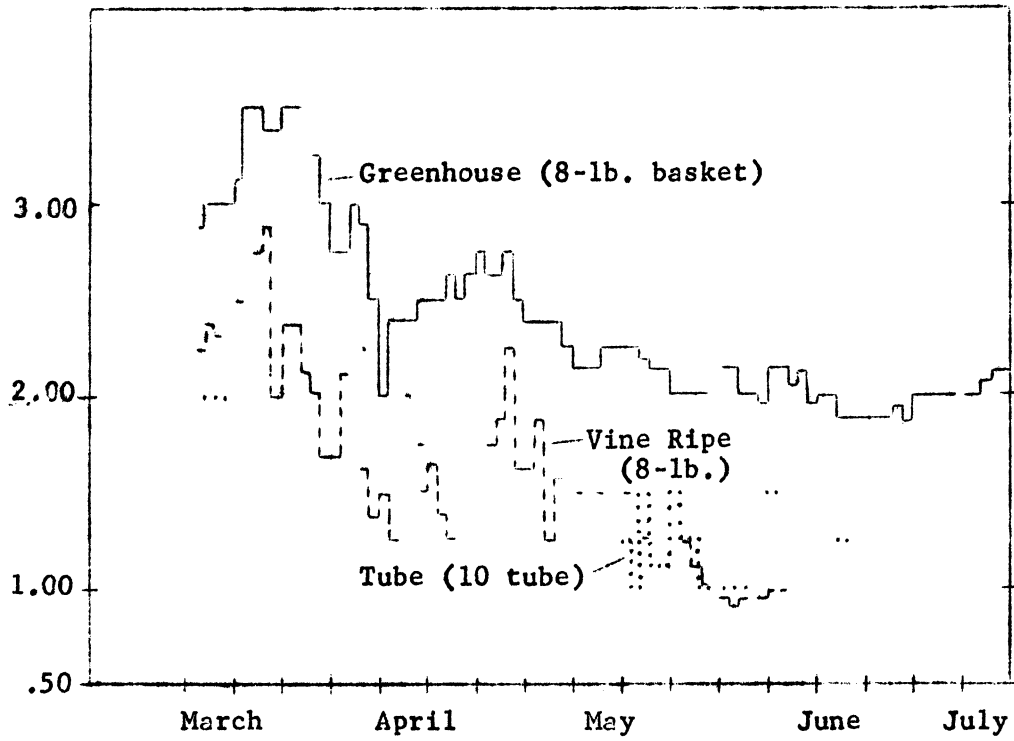
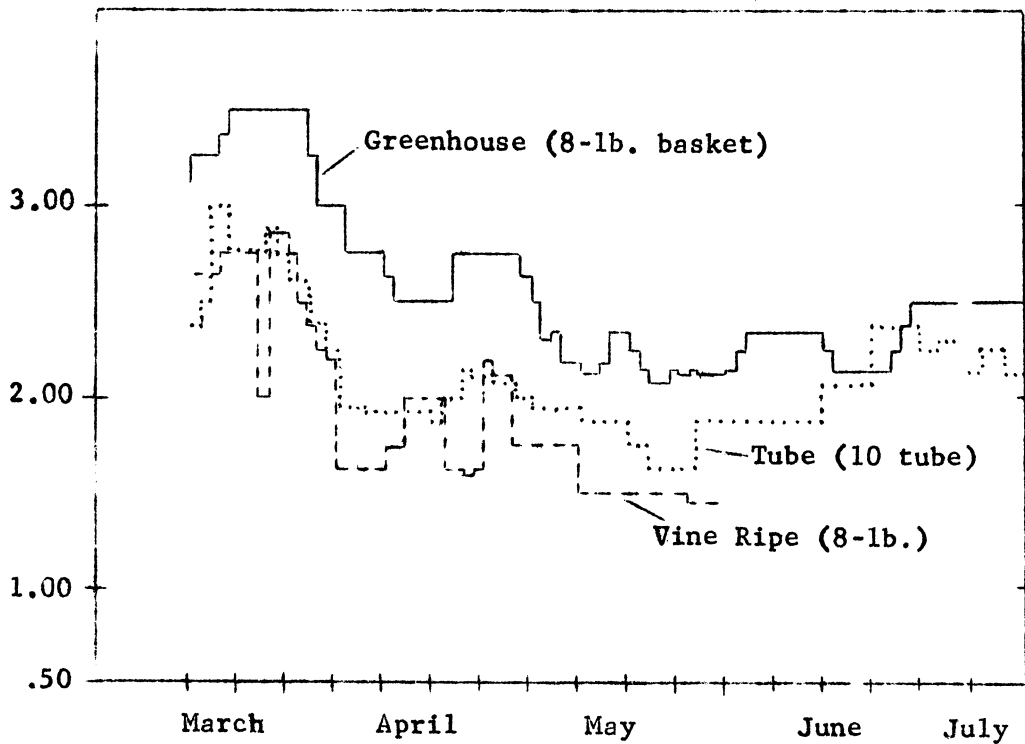


Figure 4. Carlot Unloads of Tomatoes in 14 Cities in Market Area for Ohio Greenhouse Tomatoes, 1964

Figure 5. Prices of Fresh Tomatoes on the Cincinnati Wholesale Market, March 15 - July 10, 1964\*



Prices of Fresh Tomatoes on the Cleveland Wholesale Market, March 15 - July 10, 1964\*



\* Source: Market News Reports, U.S.D.A.

Ohio greenhouse tomatoes varied by city and by season of the year. In Cleveland, 81.2 percent of the tomatoes in April-July and 83.1 percent for October-December were from Ohio--mostly greenhouse--sources (Table 4). For Cincinnati only 44.0 percent of tomatoes were from Ohio sources in April-July while 75.5 percent were Ohio tomatoes for October-December. In general, for the east coast and southern cities the fall crop tomatoes accounted for a considerably greater part of the total supply than did the spring crop. This was true for Cincinnati, Louisville, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Birmingham, and Miami.

Only in five markets, three of which are minor ones, did Ohio outdoor tomatoes during August-September furnish a higher proportion of the total supply than did Ohio greenhouse tomatoes. These were Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Nashville, Miami, and Atlanta.

Table 4. Percentage of Tomatoes Unloaded at 19 Major Cities that were from Ohio in Jan.-Mar., April-July, Aug.-Sept. and Oct.-Dec., 1963

	Jan-Mar	Apr-July	Aug-Sept	Oct-Dec
	(Percent of Total Unloads)			
Cleveland	21.6	81.2	60.2	83.1
Cincinnati	3.9	44.0	75.5	56.2
Buffalo	1.1	35.9	-	36.4
Detroit	0.7	25.5	4.5	24.8
Pittsburgh	2.1	24.3	41.7	27.6
Albany	-	20.6	-	17.7
Milwaukee	-	17.2	2.8	8.3
Baltimore	-	6.6	-	8.6
Louisville	0	6.2	2.9	13.8
Chicago	0.6	6.0	3.9	7.8
New York	-	2.7	-	5.0
Indianapolis	-	1.4	-	2.1
Philadelphia	-	1.1	-	4.8
Boston	-	0.1	-	-
Providence	-	-	-	12.0
Nashville	-	-	4.5	3.3
Miami	-	-	3.0	2.7
Birmingham	-	-	-	3.2
Atlanta	-	-	1.4	-

Source: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Unloads, AMS. U.S.D.A., 1963