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THE 1967 SPRING CROP TOMATO SITUATION

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The 1967 Spring Crop Tomato Situation

General Situation

The 1967 spring tomato crop in both Florida and Texas is smaller than that for 1966. Plantings in December 1967 were similar to those in December 1966 but plantings since December have been smaller for each week except for the weeks ending February 4 and March 4. However, plantings from December 1, 1966 through March 1967 were substantially higher than for any like period during the past eight years except for the previous year (December 1965 - March 1966). For instance, there were over 5,000 more acres in Florida yet to begin harvest April 18, 1967 than on April 16, 1965 and about 1,000 acres more than on April 15, 1964.

For Texas, the 1967 crop is 3,200 acres less than that for 1966 and the 1967 crop is somewhat earlier.

Vine ripe tomato acreage declined for only the second time since 1959. However, vine ripe tomato acreage in 1967 is greater than for any year except 1965 and 1966.

Tomato shipments to date in 1967 have been quite similar to those for 1966, both for Mexican and domestic tomatoes. It would appear that the peak in imports from Mexico was reached about two weeks earlier in 1967 than in 1966.

Table 1. Comparisons of Acreage of Vine Ripe Tomatoes with Total Tomato Plantings and Plantings After December 1 in Florida, By Seasons, 1959-1960 to 1966-1967

Seasons	Total Tomato Plantings		V i n e R i p e T o m a t o e s			
	Total Acreage	Acres Planted After Dec. 1	Acres Planted	Percent of Total Crop	Acres Planted After Dec. 1	Percent Planted After Dec. 1
1959-60	38,270	14,000	2410	6.3	150	6.2
1960-61	40,640	13,470	3550	8.7	40	1.1
1961-62	41,520	15,130	3350	8.1	330	9.8
1962-63	44,150	15,430	4120	9.3	690	16.7
1963-64	43,420	14,800	5190	12.0	460	8.9
1964-65	50,200	14,250	6780	13.5	510	7.5
1965-66	51,450	20,610	8330	16.2	2370	28.4
1966-67	46,890	18,270	6580	14.0	1290	19.6

Crop by States and Major Production Areas

Florida

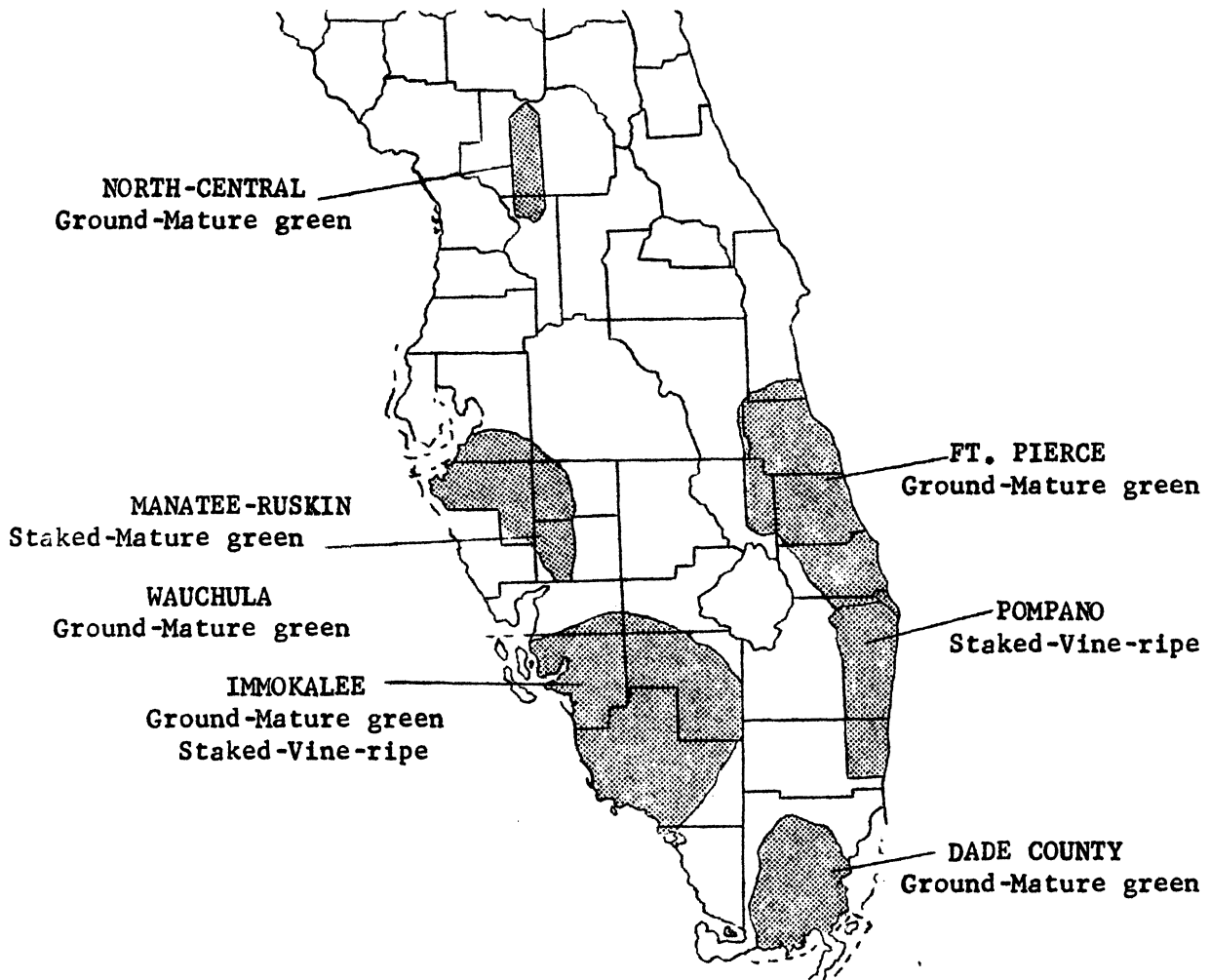
All planting and transplanting of the late winter and spring tomato crop in Florida was completed by March 11. Acreage for harvest during the entire 1966-67 season amounts to 46,890 acres which is 4,560 acres or 9 percent below that of last season (Table 1).

Vine Ripes - Only 6,580 acres were planted this season compared with 8,310 acres for the 1965-66 season (Table 1). This represents a decline of 1,730 acres or almost 21 percent. Furthermore, a smaller percentage of the vine ripe acreage this season was planted after December 1. Last season 2,370 acres or 28.4 percent was planted after December 1, while only 1,290 acres or 19.6 percent was planted after December 1 during the 1966-67 season. Harvest of vine ripes is declining in the Pompano area and is at or near the peak in the Immokalee area.

Dade County - In this area a total of 17,560 acres were planted for winter and early spring harvest. This represents slightly over 37 percent of the total Florida acreage for the season. Total acreage last season in Dade amounted to 17,950 acres or only 2 percent above that for the current season. Only mature green tomatoes are produced in Dade County. Harvest is expected to be complete by the end of April.

Fort Pierce - There are 6,850 acres in this area for harvest this season compared with 8,390 acres last year. This represents a decline of 18 percent. Mature greens are produced in the Fort Pierce area. Normal yields are expected and peak harvest should occur in early May.

Figure 1. Principal Florida Tomato Producing Areas and Type of Tomatoes Grown



Fort Myers-Immokalee - Acreage in this area amounts to 8,320 acres compared to 9,400 acres for harvest last season. This represents a decline in acreage of almost 12 percent. Harvest of both vine ripe and mature greens is in progress and should reach a peak around the end of April.

Mantee-Ruskin-Wachula - The acreage of mature greens in this area is 6 percent above that for last season. This year 6,580 acres have been planted for spring harvest while 6,190 acres were available last year. Harvest is expected to begin the last week of April. Crop prospects look good.

North Central - There are 1,000 acres for harvest this season against 1,210 acres last year. The decrease amounts to about 17 percent. Only mature greens are produced in North Central Florida and harvest usually occurs in late May and early June. Most acreage is making good progress.

Texas

Acreage for spring harvest in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is 40 per cent below that of last season. There are 2,740 acres planted this year compared with 4,590 acres in 1966. The mature green crop in this area reaches peak harvest in May. Growing conditions to date have been generally favorable (Table 3).

Mexico

Table 2. Winter Acreage of Tomatoes in Western Mexico 1964-65 through 1966-67*

Type of Tomato	1964-65	1965-66 (1,000 Acres)	1966-67
Pole (Staked)	16.1	20.0	23.7
Green or Bush (not staked)	14.9	9.6	4.9
Cherry	.8	1.2	2.2
Total	31.8	30.8	30.8

* Foreign Agriculture, U.S.D.A., FAS, January 30, 1967

Total acreage of plantings of fresh tomatoes in Mexico in 1966-67 are identical with those in 1965-66, although the type continues to change (Table 2). The shift continues from the bush type, largely for mature green harvest, to staked tomatoes which include vine-ripe as well as mature green. The marketable harvest from the staked tomatoes is reported to be three or four times as great per acre as from the bush tomatoes. This would suggest that the market potential from Mexican acreage in 1967 will be one-fourth to one-third greater than in 1966.

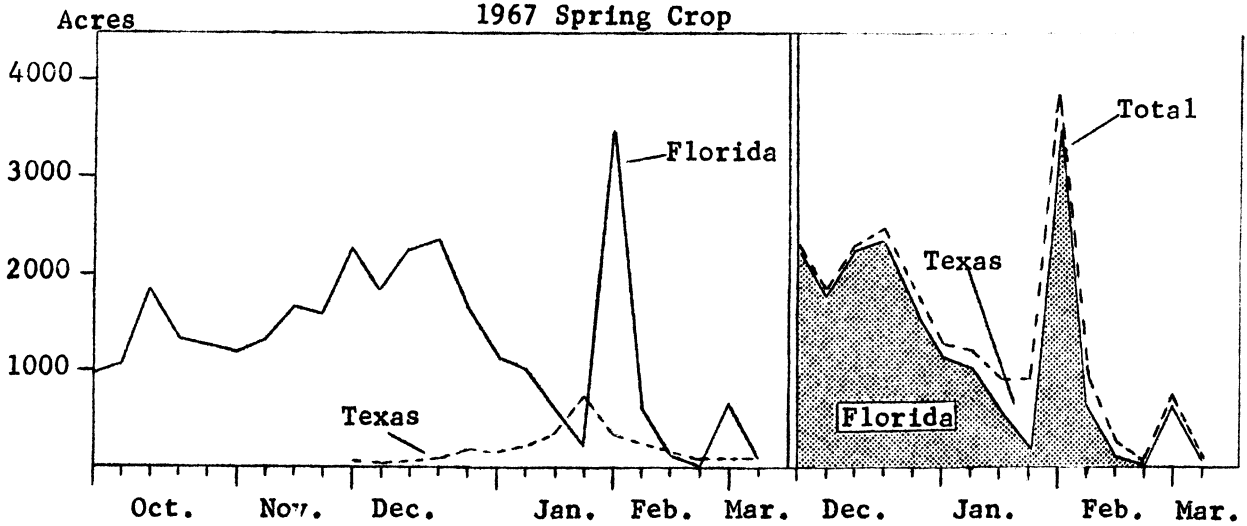
The acreage of cherry type tomatoes continued to increase rapidly in 1967.

Table 3. Florida and Texas Tomato Acreage Inventory as of April 15, 1967, with Comparisons

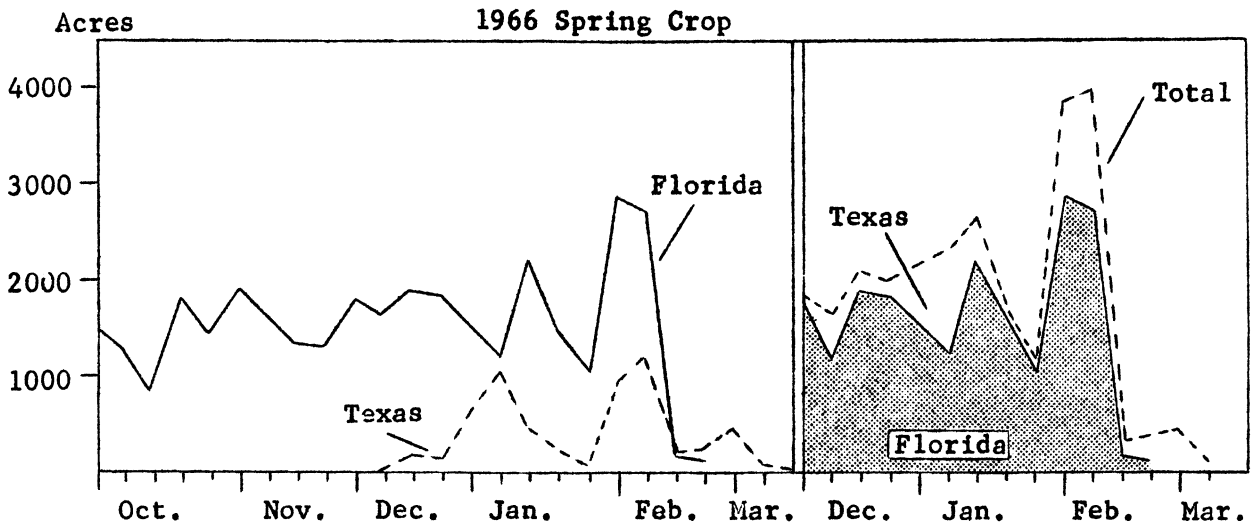
Area	Stage of Development of Acres Growing or in Harvest							Harv'd to Date
	Acres for Harvest	Pre-Fruit Set	Fruit Set	Harvest Begin 2 Weeks	Harvesting Number Times Picked			
					One	Two	3 or More	
Vine-Ripe	6580	130	20	200	260	20	2150	3800
Dade	17560	---	40	200	1010	1660	500	14150
Ft. Pierce	6880	500	1380	780	820	20	---	3380
Immokalee	8320	60	380	1370	1400	1000	---	4110
Manatee	6580	1070	3250	800	---	---	---	1460
North Central	1000	950	50	---	---	---	---	---
Total Florida								
1966-67	46920	2710	5120	3350	3490	2700	2650	26900
1965-66	51610	3030	9660	4070	2460	1170	3860	27360
1964-65	50200	300	2610	2830	2870	2900	3410	35280
1963-64	43380	800	6280	3600	2050	1230	3330	24390
1962-63	44280	1040	3160	6570	3060	2530	3160	23400
Total Texas								
1966-67	2740	1200	1210	310	---	---	---	---
1965-66	5940	4320	1620	---	---	---	---	---
1964-65	7600	4520	3050	30	---	---	---	---
1963-64	14750	8000	6600	150	---	---	---	---

Source: U.S.D.A., Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida

Figure 2. Acreage of Tomatoes Planted Weekly in Florida and Texas. 1965-66 and 1966-67 Seasons



Florida Plantings were lower in early January and slightly higher in late January than in 1966. Plantings in Texas were smaller and earlier than in 1966.



Source: U.S.D.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida.

Plantings

Total plantings in Florida and Texas after January 1, 1967 are well below those for 1966. Most of this decline occurred prior to February 4. Since that time plantings in 1967 have generally been equal to or greater than for the corresponding week in 1966 (Figure 2). Especially for the week of March 4 plantings in 1967 were much higher than for 1966. Florida has a much greater proportion of the total plantings and plantings after January 1 in 1967 than in 1966.

In both the 1966 and 1967 seasons in Florida, the tendency has been towards heavier late spring planting than in any other years when records are available. This has been particularly apparent in the late January and in February and March, when in years previous to 1966 plantings in Florida generally were insignificant.

Tomato Shipment

Since February 1, 1967 combined fresh tomato shipments from Florida, California, and Mexico have been slightly above those for a like period in 1966. A greater proportion of shipments have been from Florida in 1967 than in 1966, particularly in the March-April part of the period. Week-to-week variations in shipments have been greater in 1967 than in 1966.

For the part of the season from April 15, 1967 onward, some indication of shipments may be inferred from the volume for recent years. Shipments from Florida for Spring 1966 were below those for 1964 and 1965 from mid April to mid May (Table 4). However, for the three week period May 22 - June 11, shipments in 1966 were much larger than in 1964 or 1965. Since the pattern of plantings for 1967 is similar to that for 1966, a pattern of shipments similar to that for 1966 will probably develop. The unknown is, of course, the weather in Florida which is not ideal for tomatoes at this late season. Last year, hurricane Alma and the rain

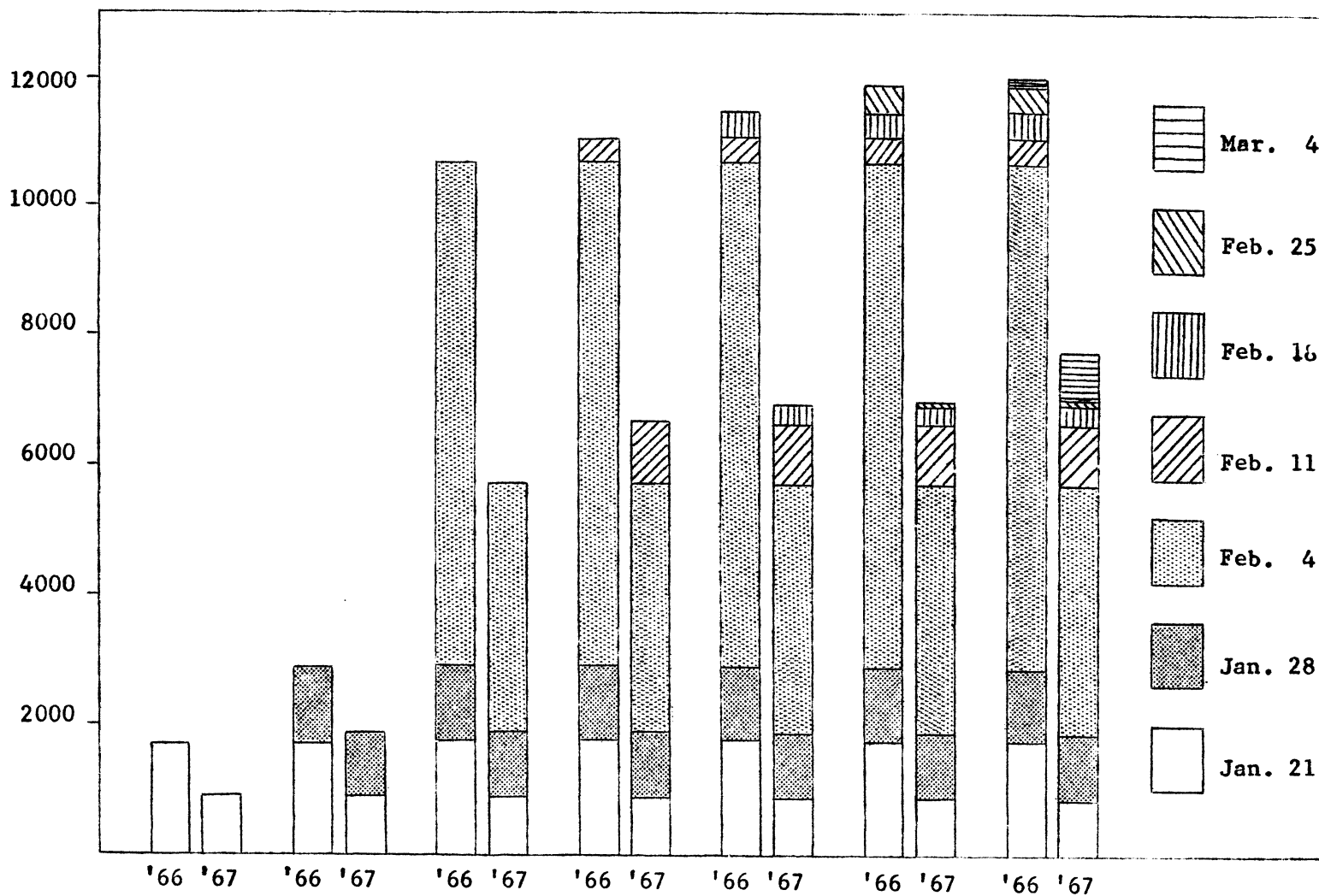


Figure 3. Cumulative Weekly Plantings of Tomatoes in Florida and Texas, 1965-66 and 1966-67 Seasons.

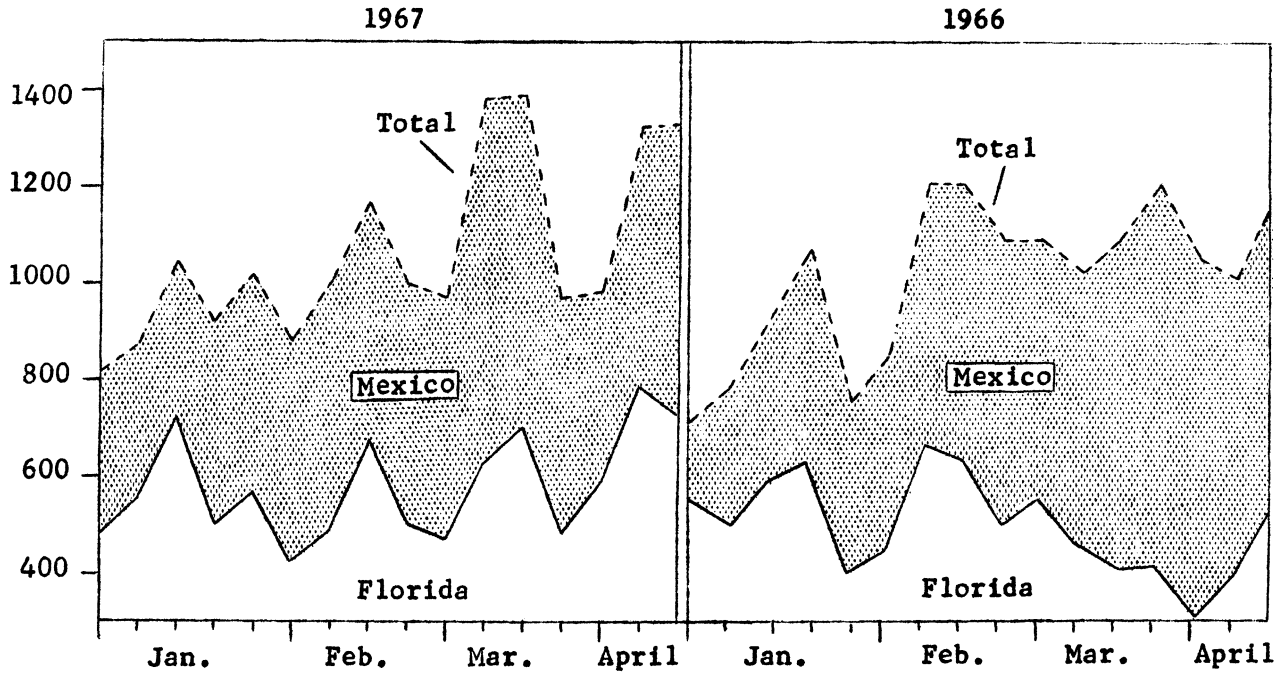
Source: U.S.D.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida.

Table 4. Weekly Tomato Shipments from April 16 - July 2,
Florida and Texas 1964-1966

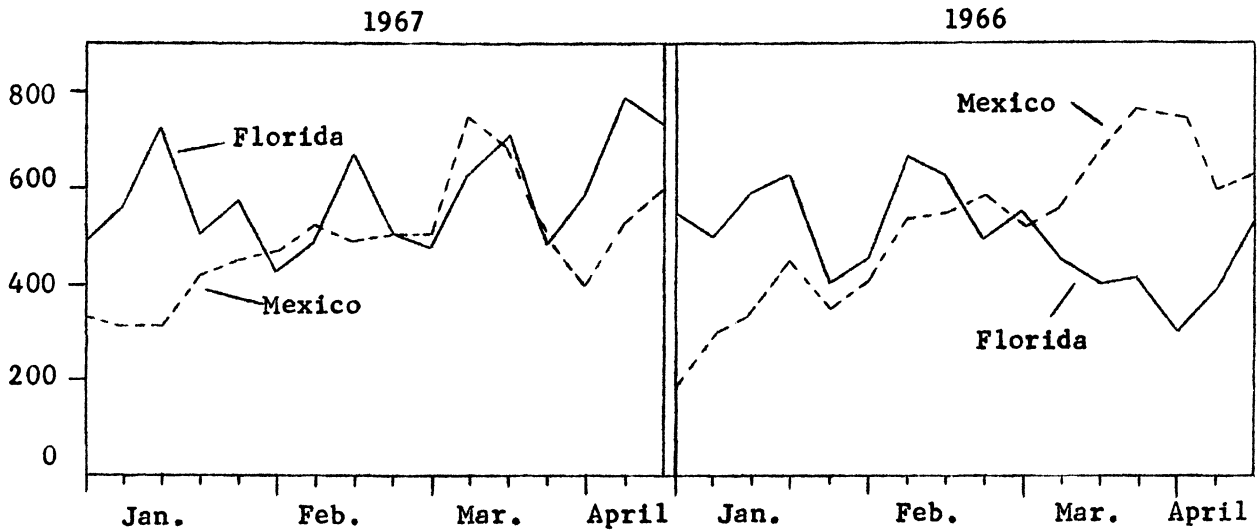
Week Ending	1964	1965	1966
(Carlot Equivalents)			
<u>FLORIDA</u>			
April 23	925	823	715
30	1209	907	794
May 7	1661	1013	969
14	1087	1229	1136
21	1191	1221	1242
28	962	1049	1153
June 4	655	572	1178
11	190	148	667
18	53	43	212
25	13	13	23
July 2	7	3	4
<u>TEXAS</u>			
April 23	---	---	---
30	1	---	---
May 7	41	2	---
14	166	12	---
21	205	11	14
28	27	86	22
June 4	108	241	35
11	225	368	123
18	107	318	67
25	76	81	7
July 2	28	13	6

Source: U.S.D.A., Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida

Figure 4. Weekly Shipments of Tomatoes from Florida and Mexico, 1966 and 1967 Spring Crops.

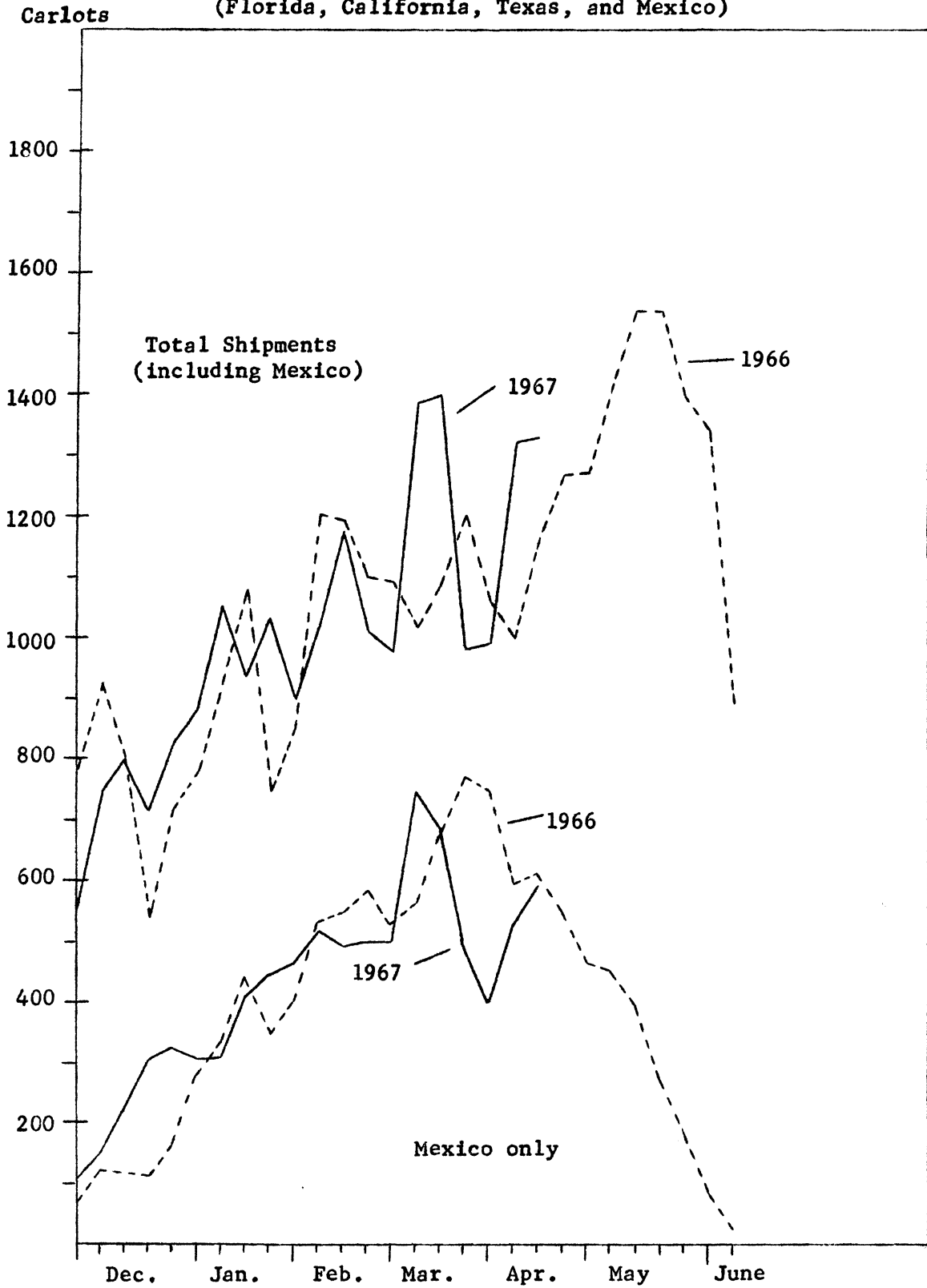


Total shipments in March and April, 1967 have been larger than in 1966 and more variable from week to week. Shipments from Mexico have been smaller in late March and April than in 1966.



Source: U.S.D.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida.

Figure 5. Fresh Tomato Shipments in the United States,
December - June 1966 and 1967 Seasons
(Florida, California, Texas, and Mexico)



Source: U.S.D.A. Statistical Reporting Service, Orlando, Florida

that accompanied it virtually ended the Florida harvest. Depending on the weather, the earliness or lateness of the end of the Florida season can be quite variable this year. The acreage is there for shipments equal to those for last year up to June and for greater shipments after June 15 than actually occurred after that date. Other than 1966 no other year appears to resemble closely the 1967 season (Table 3). The 1964 season resembles 1967 for potential May harvest, but not for later weeks.

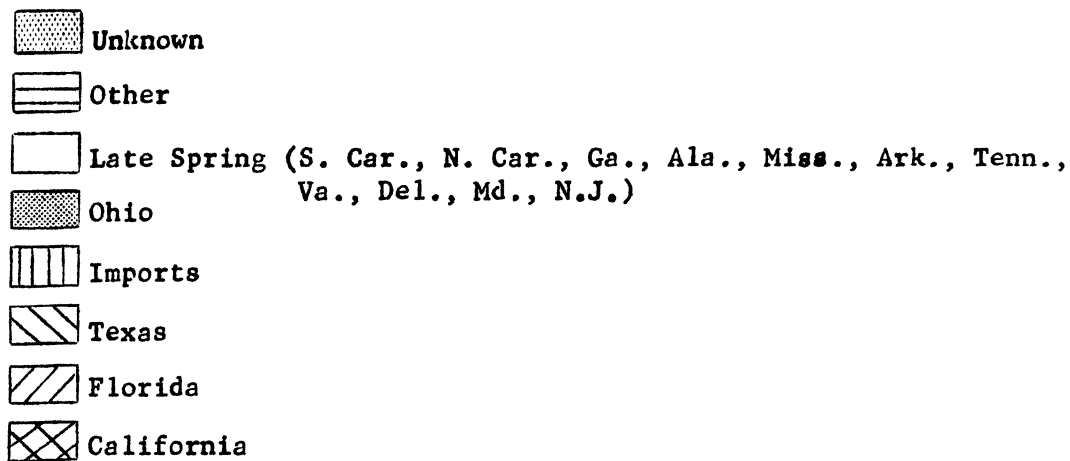
Carlot Unloads In Greenhouse Market Area

Tomato receipts for 1966 in the 12 city market areas for Ohio tomatoes were heavily from Florida and Mexico in April, Florida in May, Florida and late spring states in June and from late spring states plus California in July. Ohio was the second most important source of supply in both May and June but in no month did the state supply more than 23 percent of the unloads at these markets. Deliveries to secondary markets such as Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, Akron and to similarly important secondary markets in other states were not included because no published market news reports are available for them.

The shipments from Mexico to these 12 markets in April and May 1966 were greater than in April and May 1963, 1964 or 1965. Shipments from Ohio declined during this period. It is probable that the reduction in unloads in these 12 cities represented an increase in direct shipments from Ohio to the secondary markets mentioned above rather than to an overall decline in greenhouse tomatoes marketed.

Both Florida and California increased their share of the June market in the 12 city area in 1966 over 1964.

The importance of both California and the late spring states was also greater in 1966 than in earlier years in the July market.



Unloads
(Carlot equivalent)

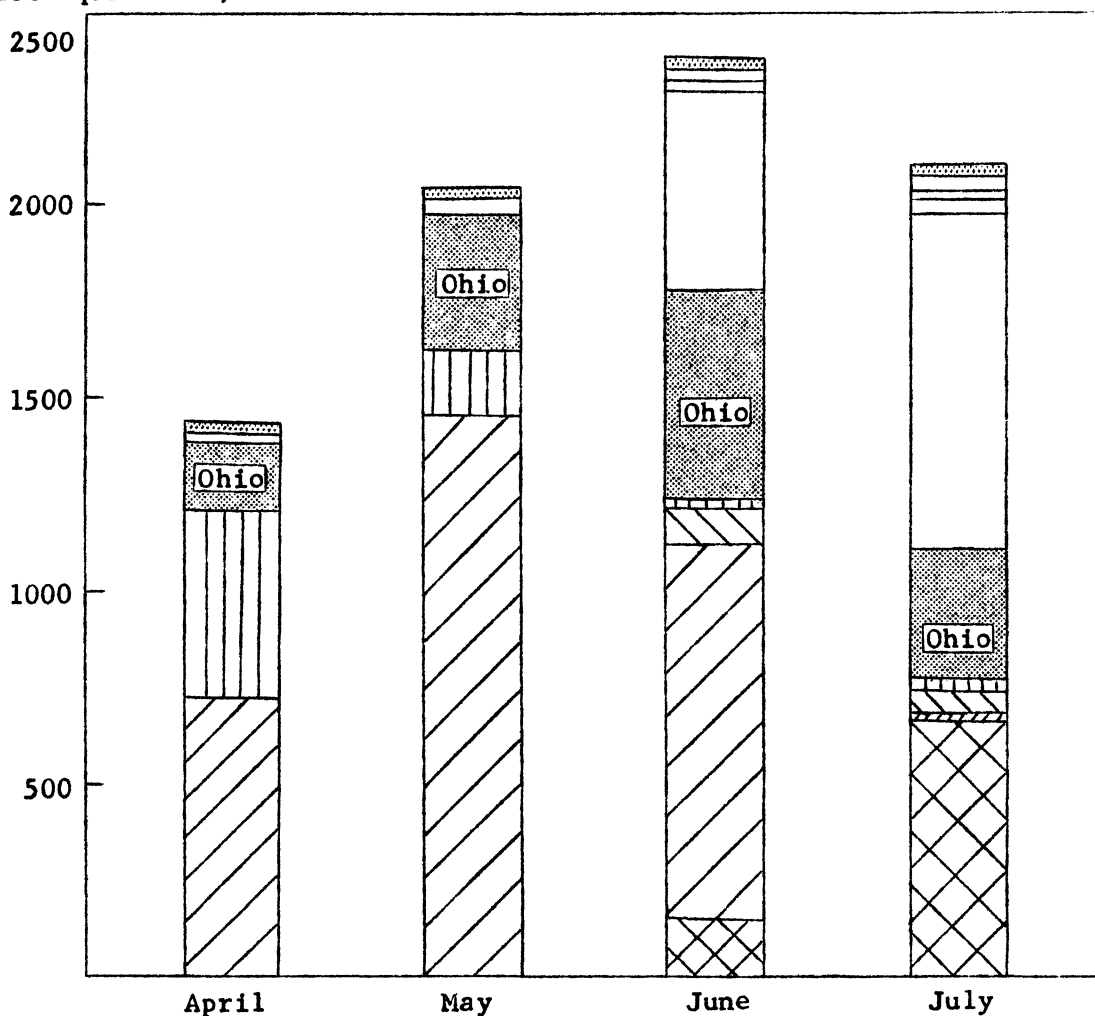


Figure 6. Origin of Carlot Unloads of Fresh Tomatoes in 12 City Market Areas for Ohio Tomatoes, April - July, 1966.

Cities: Albany, Baltimore, Buffalo, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., Montreal, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit.

Source: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Unloads, U.S.D.A., C. & M.S., March 1967.

Table 5. Carlots and Percentage of Tomato Unloads at 18 Major Markets that were from Ohio in April-July, 1966 and 1963

Market	1966		1963	
	<u>Carlots</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Carlots</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Cleveland	574	40.2	797	44.6
Detroit	162	11.3	179	10.0
Cincinnati	130	9.2	154	8.6
Montreal	128	9.0	181	10.1
Pittsburg	113	7.9	159	8.9
Chicago	72	5.0	75	4.2
Buffalo	61	4.3	56	3.1
New York	58	4.1	61	3.4
Baltimore	29	2.0	33	1.8
Albany	26	1.8	26	1.4
Washington	25	1.7	19	1.1
Philadelphia	25	1.7	12	0.7
Milwaukee	9	0.6	17	1.0
Louisville	7	0.5	14	0.8
Providence	6	0.4	--	---
St. Louis	3	0.2	--	---
Boston	2	0.1	1	---
Indianapolis	--	---	5	0.3
Totals	1430	100.0	1789	100.0

Source: Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Unloads, U.S.D.A., C.&M.S., 1966 and 1963

Tomato Prices

Prices of all three types of tomatoes on the Cleveland wholesale market in 1967 have been below those for 1966 more often than above. The 1966 prices were, in turn, below those for 1965. Since April 1, quoted prices of greenhouse tomatoes have averaged about 30 cents per basket less than in a like period in 1966, while vine ripe tomatoes have averaged only 12 cents less and tube tomatoes about 50 cents less (10-tube carton). For the same three week period (April 1-21) in 1967 greenhouse tomatoes have averaged about 30 cents per 8-lb. basket more than vine ripe tomatoes, and 45 cents per basket more than the 10-tube carton of tube tomatoes.

Table 6. Comparison of Weekly Average Tomato Prices on the Cleveland Market for 1965, 1966, and 1967 Spring Crop Seasons

Week Ending	1965 (\$)	1966 (\$)	1967 (\$)	Difference 1966 & 1967 (\$)
GREENHOUSE (8-lb. basket)				
March 3	-	-	-	-
March 10	-	-	-	-
March 17	-	-	-	-
March 24	3.75	3.25	3.15	-.10
March 31	3.47	3.25	3.00	-.25
April 7	3.25	3.25	2.55	-.70
April 14	3.25	3.09	2.70	-.39
April 21	3.25	2.65	2.80	+.15
VINE RIPE (8-lb. carton)				
March 3	2.09	1.54	2.15	+.61
March 10	2.10	1.75	2.75	+1.00
March 17	2.42	2.00	1.65	-.35
March 24	2.85	2.10	1.87	-.23
March 31	2.55	2.45	2.05	-.40
April 7	2.25	2.78	2.25	-.53
April 14	2.90	2.60	2.58	-.02
April 21	2.90	2.15	2.33	+.18
TUBE (10-tube carton)				
March 3	2.29	1.82	2.00	+.18
March 10	2.62	2.00	2.42	+.42
March 17	2.75	2.12	2.30	+.18
March 24	2.72	2.15	2.12	-.03
March 31	2.62	2.17	2.00	-.17
April 7	2.72	2.68	2.00	-.68
April 14	3.25	2.86	2.56	-.30
April 21	3.12	2.70	2.12	-.58

Source: Based on Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Market News, U.S.D.A., C&MS, Cleveland, Ohio

Conclusions and Comments

The season from April 21 through May looks somewhat like last year with the potential for continuing heavy shipments from both Florida and Mexico through May and early June. Whether Mexico continues to ship in volume will depend on whether prices get so low as to make it unprofitable. Whether Florida continues to ship heavily depends in large measure on the weather in Florida and on consequent market quality. The acreage for heavy shipments is there although slightly less than for 1966. Acreages of tomatoes are down from 1966 in both Texas and California early spring plantings. No data are available on late spring plantings, but the relatively unfavorable prices since Mid-March may well discourage plantings in these states.

Despite the above record to date and the market volume potential it is unlikely that greenhouse tomatoes prices from April 20, 1967 will average less than for a like period in 1966.

In view of the situation to date and the outlook from here on, the final comment from the 1966 situation report still appears appropriate.

"Since greenhouse tomato growers cannot afford to get shelf space by offering lower prices than their competitors, it should pay them to do more towards selling retailers and consumers on the other advantages of their product. There has probably never been a time in the history of the industry when aggressive selling and promotion would offer more rewards than during the next few weeks. Perhaps it is still not too late to try something in one or more markets in 1966."