Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – September 20, 2011 Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension (802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

(Warren) Late blight on high tunnel tomatoes is the nail in the coffin for this season. Not much to do as 3/4 of the fall crops are now plowed under and high tunnel soils rendered unplantable for winter salads by flood water. Aside from re-grading and filling in scoured fields we will be focusing on making compost in a big way. Lots of really nice alfalfa silage bails around for the cost of trucking that will make really nice compost. We are also applying large amounts of rock dust to both the compost and directly to the fields. We are hoping this will deal with the micro nutrient deficiencies we have been seeing. I really like the idea of applying large amounts (10 tons to the acre) of relatively unavailable materials every few years as opposed to available materials several times a season.

(Hoosick Falls, NY) We may have a frost, hoping there is enough leaf cover on the winter squash; it will help that they are way up on the hill. Will harvest acorns since they are ready. Potatoes are starting to rot in the field, after 16+ inches of rain in 12 days the water table is just starting to recede but it is too late. re harvesting are also starting to rot; hopefully storage carrots on top of the hill finish sizing up soon. Last crop of beans drowned and wilted as we were picking them one last time, beet tops are also suffering from too much water. Greenhouse tomatoes are doing well and peppers in their prime are coloring well. We are thankful to have some crops to report on.

(Westminster West) All crops in except fall carrots and beets which are looking really nice, even though I planted them later then I would like. I really didn't want to harvest carrots in November but so it goes. Our Red Wing onions have way too much Botrytis. The tops were clean and no sign of disease yet they are having internal issues. Other varieties are not affected so it s a mystery. Stand sales very strong and wholesale produce is really strong; blessed with good crops this year. Picking fall raspberries like crazy, pushback on price, the economy is not helping but at least I know I won t get fired. Tilling old residue in and planting cover crops. Always feels nice cleaning up the fields and get ready for fall. Cleaning up the barn for NOFA s 40th Anniversary party here on Oct.1. I hope to see many old friends and many new ones too!

(Plainfield NH) No frost yet. Corn earworm showing up in some corn blocks, wondering if old trap lures (even if stored in freezer) being ineffective or the influx from Irene that came in those couple of days sing about 35% in grading, and I am concerned about escapees after pack out. Trying to get potatoes up, but with reduced work force, shortening days and lots to still harvest and sell, it is difficult to make any headway. Greenhouse tomatoes holding on, colored peppers very brisk but flood pretty well did away with brassica for the stand. Fall vines look good, I impressed how well they stood up this year until the bitter end; negligible Powdery Mildew or Alternaria. Have not sprayed carrot tops recently but they too look really clean. Wholesale still seems pretty good but it feels as though where business is great when the weather is warm and sunny, slack during weekdays and anything slightly cloudy.

(Argyle NY) Irene didn't do much damage but the next rains and thunderstorms, with nearly 13" of rain over 9 days, did. Lettuce took a beating and fall spinach is suffering; diseases came in on beets, squash. However, on the bright side, it has dried up. We harvested most winter squash, with butternut now ready. Some squash is already breaking down in storage. Sweet potatoes look great and we will harvest soon. The 4000 Chandler strawberry plugs we grew from tips were planted on Biotello with straw mulch in-between (chopped by our Teagle 3 point hitch round bale shredder that we love). High tunnels are cleared out and ready for planting spinach, salad mix and greens for winter.

We will be trialing lots of spinach varieties and using beneficial mites to prevent the spinach mite problem we had last year in another tunnel. Markets are strong; customers tolerant about lacking some products due to storms. We encourage them to plan their meals around what the farmers have that day.

(Plainfield) Fall Raspberries overwhelming their trellis. Late blight in field tomatoes, but still OK in greenhouses; cherry tomato production way down from peak. Carrots sold out quickly. Mowed potato vines (and weeds). Kale responded well to Pro-Booster. Chard all spotty. Rutabaga harvest just starting. Daikon needs another week or two. Great pick of Carmen and Italia red peppers. Usual mix of success and failure. No frost, no flood; lucky this time.

(Bath MI) Rain today was welcomed after seeding beds that the movable tunnel will be pushed over in a few weeks. Baby and regular size spinach, hakurei turnips, red and french breakfast radishes, and broccoli raab all went in. In the bigger stationary tunnel most of the beds are planted. Carrots look good in three beds but spotty in the other two; red beets look great, chard and kale should put on enough growth in the next month to be ready to harvest most of the winter. Turnips and broccoli raab are growing, and we are half way through salad mix plantings. Waiting to pull sweet potatoes until the first or second week of October to make room for last salad mix planting. Trying kohlrabi for the winter for the first time but not sure we got it in early enough; will know in three to four weeks. If not, we might put in a late planting of spinach for March harvests Looking forward to moving the tunnel for the first time to see how it goes.

VTAMP HELPS FARMERS RESOLVE PROBLEMS

The Vermont Agricultural Mediation Program (VTAMP) provides free mediation services to the agricultural community in Vermont. Due to the recent flooding, farms may have insurance claim issues, USDA program compliance issues, or other financial issues. VTAMP is a non-profit organization that can help farms resolve these and other agricultural issues without a fee. For more information see: www.vtamp.org or call 802-583-1100 or email matts@emcenter.org.

GROWING PLACES COURSE FOR STARTING AN AG BUSINESS

If youhis